

# Enlisting for Christ and the Church



Howard Agnew Johnston

Rom 5 1 to 11

Nellis E. Manson.

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# ENLISTING FOR CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

HOWARD AGNEW JOHNSTON



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MY BELOVED WIFE  
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## CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFATORY NOTE.....	ix

### Study I. Enlisting Ourselves

<i>First Day:</i> IF OUT OF CHRIST, WE ARE LOST.....	1
<i>Second Day:</i> IF OUT OF CHRIST, WE ARE SIN-SICK.....	3
<i>Third Day:</i> IF OUT OF CHRIST, WE ARE SLAVES TO SIN.....	4
<i>Fourth Day:</i> IF OUT OF CHRIST, WE HAVE FORFEITED OUR SONSHIP.....	6
<i>Fifth Day:</i> THOUGH SAVED, WE STILL ARE TEMPTED AND TRIED....	7
<i>Sixth Day:</i> SINCE CHRIST HAS SAVED US, WE OWE ALL TO HIM.....	9
<i>Seventh Day:</i> SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CLASS.....	11

### Study II. We Are Saved to Serve

<i>First Day:</i> EVERY ONE IS SERVING—WHO IS THE MASTER?.....	13
<i>Second Day:</i> THE PROBLEM OF SELF-DENIAL.....	14
<i>Third Day:</i> SERVICE AND POWER.....	16
<i>Fourth Day:</i> GOD'S FIRST PLAN FOR OUR SERVICE.....	17
<i>Fifth Day:</i> THE CRIME OF UNCONCERN.....	19
<i>Sixth Day:</i> THE CONSTRAINT OF CHRIST'S LOVE.....	20
<i>Seventh Day:</i> SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CLASS.....	22

### Study III. Realizing God's Redeeming Love

<i>First Day:</i> GOD'S VALUATION OF AN IMMORTAL SOUL.....	24
<i>Second Day:</i> GOD'S COMPASSION FOR MEN.....	25
<i>Third Day:</i> GOD'S DESTINY FOR MEN.....	27
<i>Fourth Day:</i> GOD'S GIFT OF GRACE.....	28
<i>Fifth Day:</i> GOD'S GIFT OF CHRIST.....	30
<i>Sixth Day:</i> GOD'S GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.....	31
<i>Seventh Day:</i> SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CLASS.....	33

### Study IV. Enlisting Others

<i>First Day:</i> HESITATION TO ATTEMPT THIS WORK.....	35
<i>Second Day:</i> THE NEED OF INTELLIGENT PREPARATION.....	36
<i>Third Day:</i> THE DUTY OF CHRISTIAN LEADERS.....	38
<i>Fourth Day:</i> A TRAINING CLASS IN EVERY CHURCH AND ASSOCIATION.....	40
<i>Fifth Day:</i> ORGANIZING WORKERS IN CHURCH AND ASSOCIATION....	42
<i>Sixth Day:</i> MAKING IT DEFINITE.....	43
<i>Seventh Day:</i> SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CLASS.....	45

### Study V. Special Plans for Bible Classes

<i>First Day:</i> SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES IN BIBLE SCHOOLS.....	47
<i>Second Day:</i> ADULT BIBLE CLASSES.....	48
<i>Third Day:</i> RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS.....	50
<i>Fourth Day:</i> PROBLEMS OF ADOLESCENCE.....	52
<i>Fifth Day:</i> A PROGRAM FOR QUIET, INTENSIVE WORK.....	53
<i>Sixth Day:</i> TRAINING YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE SOUL WINNERS.....	55
<i>Seventh Day:</i> SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CLASS.....	56

## Study VI. Personal Recruiting Equipment

<i>First Day:</i> THE SPIRIT OF OBEDIENCE.....	58
<i>Second Day:</i> CULTIVATING CHRIST'S LOVE FOR THE LOST.....	59
<i>Third Day:</i> FAITH IN GOD'S POWER TO SAVE.....	61
<i>Fourth Day:</i> PURITY—THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EXAMPLE.....	63
<i>Fifth Day:</i> PRAYER—THE SECRET OF POWER.....	65
<i>Sixth Day:</i> KNOWING THE BIBLE—GOD'S ENSAMPLES.....	66
<i>Seventh Day:</i> SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CLASS.....	68

## Study VII. Taking God into Account

<i>First Day:</i> GOD ONLY CAN SAVE.....	70
<i>Second Day:</i> CHRISTIANS ARE GOD'S INSTRUMENTS.....	71
<i>Third Day:</i> GOD DOES DIVINE THINGS TODAY.....	73
<i>Fourth Day:</i> EXPECTANT FAITH HONORS GOD.....	75
<i>Fifth Day:</i> NOT POWER, BUT CHANNELS OF POWER.....	77
<i>Sixth Day:</i> NO CASE TOO HARD FOR GOD.....	79
<i>Seventh Day:</i> SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CLASS.....	81

## Study VIII. How to Approach People

<i>First Day:</i> WHEN NECESSARY, STUDY THE INDIVIDUAL.....	83
<i>Second Day:</i> MAKE AN APPOINTMENT FOR AN INTERVIEW.....	84
<i>Third Day:</i> HAVE OTHERS PRAY WITH YOU FOR THE INDIVIDUAL....	86
<i>Fourth Day:</i> BEGIN WITH A CONFESSION OF UNWORTHINESS.....	88
<i>Fifth Day:</i> FIND EVERY POSSIBLE COMMON GROUND.....	89
<i>Sixth Day:</i> DISCOVER HIS DEGREE OF FAITH.....	91
<i>Seventh Day:</i> SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CLASS.....	93

## Study IX. Principles for Dealing with People

<i>First Day:</i> KEEP TO THE POSITIVE SIDE.....	95
<i>Second Day:</i> MAKE PLAIN OUR NEED OF CHRIST.....	97
<i>Third Day:</i> BE HONEST ABOUT THE FATALITY OF SIN.....	98
<i>Fourth Day:</i> TESTIFY TO CHRIST'S WORK OF GRACE IN YOUR OWN LIFE.....	100
<i>Fifth Day:</i> EMPHASIZE CHRIST'S RIGHTFUL CLAIM UPON OUR LIVES.....	102
<i>Sixth Day:</i> USE GOD'S WORD TO MEET SPECIAL POINTS.....	103
<i>Seventh Day:</i> SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CLASS.....	105

## Study X. Scripture Answers to Common Excuses

<i>First Day:</i> EXCUSES BORN OF FEAR.....	107
(1) "I am too great a sinner"	
(2) "I cannot hold out"	
<i>Second Day:</i> EXCUSES BORN OF SELF-COMPLACENCY.....	108
(1) "I am satisfied with myself as I am"	
(2) "I am as good as most church members"	
<i>Third Day:</i> EXCUSES BORN OF INDIFFERENCE.....	109
(1) "I do not feel like it"	
(2) "Not today: some other day"	

	PAGE
<i>Fourth Day: EXCUSES BORN OF A CRITICAL SPIRIT</i> .....	110
(1) "Too many hypocrites in the Church"	
(2) "The Church is not truly Christian"	
<i>Fifth Day: EXCUSES INVOLVING EXPERIENCE</i> .....	112
(1) Waiting for some wonderful experience	
(2) Fearful of inconsistencies	
<i>Sixth Day: EXCUSES INVOLVING CONDUCT</i> .....	114
(1) Unwilling to give up some things for Christ	
(2) Hindered by business or social connections	
<i>Seventh Day: SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CLASS</i> .....	116

## Study XI. Scripture Answers to Common Objections

<i>First Day: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IS NOT NECESSARY TO SALVATION</i> .....	118
<i>Second Day: DOUBTS ABOUT THE SUPERNATURAL</i> .....	119
<i>Third Day: DIFFICULTIES WHICH SOME FIND IN THE BIBLE</i> .....	120
<i>Fourth Day: QUESTIONS ABOUT THE HEREAFTER</i> .....	123
<i>Fifth Day: "I CANNOT BELIEVE WHAT I CANNOT UNDERSTAND"</i> ....	125
<i>Sixth Day: HOW TO DISCOVER OSTENSIBLE OBJECTIONS</i> .....	127
<i>Seventh Day: SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CLASS</i> .....	129

## Study XII. Strengthening Weak Christians

<i>First Day: THE VITAL IMPORTANCE OF THIS SERVICE</i> .....	131
<i>Second Day: THE BIG BROTHER SPIRIT AT WORK</i> .....	133
<i>Third Day: ARRANGING INTERVIEWS WITH STRONG CHRISTIANS</i> ....	135
<i>Fourth Day: RECLAIMING BACKSLIDERS</i> .....	137
<i>Fifth Day: "OUT OF WEAKNESS THEY WERE MADE STRONG"</i> .....	138
<i>Sixth Day: "SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN"</i> .....	140
<i>Seventh Day: SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CLASS</i> .....	142

## Study XIII. Christ's Call to a Life Work

<i>First Day: ENLISTING FOR LIFE</i> .....	144
<i>Second Day: SUCCESS OR FAILURE?</i> .....	145
<i>Third Day: MEASURES OF MANHOOD</i> .....	147
<i>Fourth Day: WHAT IS MOST WORTH WHILE?</i> .....	149
<i>Fifth Day: WHERE DOES GOD CALL ME?</i> .....	150
<i>Sixth Day: QUESTIONS ABOUT THE COST OF FIDELITY</i> .....	152
<i>Seventh Day: SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CLASS</i> .....	154

## Study XIV. Abiding in Christ—Increasing Fruitfulness

<i>First Day: CHRIST RIGHTFULLY EXPECTS INCREASING RESULTS</i> ....	157
<i>Second Day: DEEPENING OUR FRIENDSHIP WITH CHRIST</i> .....	158
<i>Third Day: STEADFAST LOYALTY TO THE WILL OF GOD</i> .....	161
<i>Fourth Day: AN ABIDING PASSION TO ATTAIN MORE PERFECTLY</i> ...	162
<i>Fifth Day: GRACE SUFFICIENT FOR EVERY VICTORY</i> .....	164
<i>Sixth Day: FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT WITHIN AND WITHOUT</i> .....	166
<i>Seventh Day: SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CLASS</i> .....	167

**Study XV. The Blessed Rewards**

<i>First Day:</i> CHRIST EMPHASIZES THE PLACE OF REWARDS.....	169
<i>Second Day:</i> REALIZING GOD'S PURPOSE FOR US IN THIS LIFE.....	170
<i>Third Day:</i> SHARING THE FELLOWSHIP OF CHRIST'S JOY NOW.....	172
<i>Fourth Day:</i> THE BLESSEDNESS OF BEING RATHER THAN OF HAVING.	174
<i>Fifth Day:</i> WELCOMED INTO EVERLASTING HABITATIONS.....	175
<i>Sixth Day:</i> THE GLORIES OF THE REDEEMED.....	177
<i>Seventh Day:</i> SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CLASS.....	179



## PREFATORY NOTE

Some years ago Association Press published "Studies for Personal Workers" from the pen of the author. The kindly reception it received in many lands indicated a need for some discussion of the subject which would present motives and methods for winning people to Christ and the Church.

In addition to this constant emphasis upon the duty and privilege of all Christians to win others to Christ, the present book seeks to emphasize the manifest duty, all too-long neglected, of ministers and Christian leaders to make a place in the program of every church and Association for the training of willing members to do intelligent personal work along this line of service. Specific plans are suggested for the organization and development of this work. These are plans which have been successfully applied in actual experience in pastoral service. There is a further discussion of the obligations resting upon Christian young people to give themselves to some definite life-work which will seek to hasten the coming of the Kingdom of God in the world.

We live in crisis times. The Church of Christ never faced a more compelling challenge in its history than that which confronts it today. The leading Protestant communions have awakened to the imperative task to be accomplished in order that more adequate efforts be made for the advancement of the Kingdom of God upon earth. The first advance has been a great forward step in stewardship. The next advance must be a genuine consecration to the work of enlisting multitudes for Christ and the Church, who have hitherto been unreached both at home and abroad. Dr. William Hiram Foulkes, Executive Secretary of the New Era Movement, and Vice Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Interchurch World Movement, after reading part of the manuscript, kindly wrote: "It is timely, suggestive, practical, and intensely spiritual. Such qualities should insure a wide reading of its pages."

One is asked, What change has the War made in the program to

be adopted by the followers of Christ in this work of enlisting people in his cause? After much experience in cantonments and naval stations, the writer testifies that again and again he was asked to "give a straight gospel message, for the men want just that." Moreover, careful interviews with workers in France brought the universal testimony that while many edified and entertained the soldiers in a general way, whenever the individual man was really helped it was done by bringing him into right personal relation to Jesus Christ as his Saviour. What more need be said? The War did not change human nature, nor the fact of sin, nor the need of Christ in every life, nor the results which always follow when the old Gospel is presented faithfully to honest men. Every age develops new features which involve the adaptation of the truth; but it is the eternal truth as it is in Christ, who is "the same yesterday, today and forever."

The Studies are arranged with a view to a weekly meeting of a class. The "Suggestions for the Class," given for the seventh day of each week, are intended to give direction to the discussions in the class, and also to help the individual to seize upon the salient points in each day's lesson. For the book is equally available for individual study, in or out of a class.

A statement should be made about the Scripture quotations, since they do not follow any one version throughout. The fact that several versions are now in use by students of the Word, and that one version has advantages over others at different points, will justify a variation by the author in using whatever translation would seem best to express his conviction as to the meaning of the original text.

The author does not presume to have exhausted the subject; but trusts that the material given may serve as a basis for discussion, to be supplemented and enlarged, especially in the light of actual experiences by members of the class, as they begin to put the suggestions into daily practice. The little book is sent forth with the prayerful hope that it may prove helpful to many who desire to be usable in God's hand in winning people to open and consecrated allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ and his Church.

Chicago, 1919.

HOWARD AGNEW JOHNSTON.

## STUDY I

### ENLISTING OURSELVES

#### First Day: If Out of Christ, We Are Lost

Jesus Christ asked the question recorded in Mark 8: 36, 37, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his own life?" It is the most searching of all questions. Various ideas are involved in the common phrase "a lost soul." Some of these are arbitrary. But there is nothing arbitrary about realities, for they are in the nature of things. When a person is lost, it means just one thing: he does not know his way. Whether it be a little child in a great city, or a strong man in the depths of a dense forest, one is as helpless as the other in so far as he does not know his way. Each needs a guide. It is exactly so with every one who does not know God. And there is just one true way to the knowledge of God. Christ said: "I am the way and the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me. . . . He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14: 5, 9). Christ also said: "This is life eternal, that they should know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ" (John 17: 3).

Some years ago a young lawyer came to talk with the writer about some ostensible intellectual difficulties. We canvassed the ground and he admitted the reasonableness of the answers to his suggestions. Yet in a little while he was traveling in a circle, coming back to the same old points. We then asked this question: "Mr. C——, do you realize that you are a lost man?" Impatiently he replied: "Oh, you preachers make me tired. I am no more lost than you are." Then we asked him what he would think if he were to go out to the street and find a child who would report that she was lost. He replied that he would think of her as not knowing her way. "Exactly!" we replied, "and in the last hour you have absolutely proved that you do not know your way as an immortal soul. Now let us be honest. If you do not know your

way, you are lost. And if you never find your way, you are lost forever. There is no possible escape from these self-evident facts. We do not need to go to any book in order to realize the unescapable truth." For a moment he was silent. He saw it clearly. For the first time he realized his genuine, vital need. Up to that moment he had felt quite sufficient unto himself. Now he knew he needed a guide who could show him the way. His voice changed its tone, as he said: "Well, I want light." After that it was easy to lead to the frank admission that no other person could lead him into the truth but Jesus Christ. He found the way.

The tragic pathos of humanity is this dulness of human hearts in realizing that men are lost if they are out of Christ. The Apostle Paul explains it in Rom. 1: 21, "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations (own reasonings), and their foolish heart was darkened." Pride of self is at the root of man's unwillingness to be honest with himself, and admit his need. But until men do admit their need, there is no turning to a source of help higher than themselves, and they get further away from God. Even the disciples made slow progress into the light because it was so difficult at first for them to believe that God was actually incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth; but in time they realized the truth, and then the new day dawned for them and for the race.

This need of the lost world is written on every page of human history in blood and tears. It is the echo of man's despair because he is without hope and without God in the world (Eph. 2: 12). Seneca, the best of pagan philosophers, took poison and opened his veins, crying: "Ah, if one might only have a guide to truth!" The cry of Job 23: 3 is as old as the human heart, "Oh, that I knew where I might find him!" To all such Jesus Christ brings the sufficient answer in his life and truth. But it is not enough to have a guide. His readiness to guide is of no avail unless we follow him as he leads. He asks no mere credulity; but challenges us to make the actual test of his teachings, "If any man willeth (is willing) to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God" (John 7: 17). No honest man ever put Christ to this test in absolute fidelity, who has not proved that he is the guide to the lost into the pathway of light and peace.



PRAYER: *God of light and life, shine into my heart to give me the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."*

## Second Day: If Out of Christ, We Are Sin-Sick

Salvation is health. Sin is disease. Disease is not simply a physical condition. It is dis-ease, which is fundamentally an indication of spiritual unrest, a stinging conscience, a sense of estrangement from God because of known disobedience in self-will. The words *whole* and *heal* and *holy* and *health* and *wholesome* are all the same word. They include the whole man through and through. Some of these words seem to suggest experiences that are out of our reach, yet others indicate qualities which we deem absolutely necessary to our daily life at its best. They all mean the same thing. We talk of a man of integrity as one who is meeting the just expectations of his neighbors in daily living. But the man of integrity is the *integer*, the unbroken, the untouched character, one which is not fractional. The man of integrity is the wholesome man. In the fullest development of his being he is a whole man. Most people that we know are fractional, not integral. Let us be frank to say that the whole man is on his way to holiness, as a man of God, a godly man.

The fact of sin must be studied in the light of this fundamental truth. Men have been slow to admit the need of a physician who could heal their sin. It was so in Christ's time. To such he said: "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick" (Matt. 9: 12). They were criticizing him because he was going among the "publicans and sinners," the people who admitted that they needed him. Self-righteous Pharisees could not understand his eager desire to save those people. Without a spark of redeeming love in their hearts, they drew away from such. Hence Jesus gave them to understand that since they put themselves outside of those who needed him, he was not seeking to force his salvation upon them. He knew how desperately they needed him; but they did not seem even to realize it in their spirit of self-sufficiency. It is so today. Many will not admit that their sinful lives need cleansing and healing. Self-will is as fatal as any overt sin which the law condemns. Indifference is as fatal as disobedience. The only

solution to man's problem is a right relation to God through Jesus Christ. All life takes on meaning because of personal relationships, whether between men and men, or between men and God. Until we are in right relation to God and men, there is sin in our lives, and we know it. God give us courage to acknowledge it fully and frankly.

Note the difference between sin and guilt. Sin is the general condition. Guilt marks the crime of violating wilfully some particular law, either a law of God or man. Many who are not directly guilty of disobedience must suffer because of the sin of others, as in the case of the wife and children of a drunkard. Man's first problem is that of sin, not that of guilt. Sin has been persisting through the years, deepening and deadening as the years pass. Into this world of sin all are born. Hence all need a physician to heal their sin-sick natures. The moral stagnation and spiritual death of millions must be the more keenly realized because they do not know how helpless they are apart from God's appointed Saviour, who has paid the ransom for their guilt, and is ready to forgive their sins, the moment they will turn to him in penitence and faith. Thousands have proved that he is the divine physician able to cleanse the human heart. Have you proved it? If not, why not? He speaks to each needy soul today, as of old, "Wilt thou be made whole?" (John 5: 6). To all who seek this blessing, he is eager to bestow even the very fullness of the Holy Spirit of the living God.

PRAYER: *Divine Physician, give me a vivid appreciation of my sin, and my need of Thee to heal and keep, that I may indeed be made whole.*

### Third Day: If Out of Christ, We Are Slaves to Sin

What havoc sin hath wrought! To be lost and sin-sick is not all. Sin is a hard and relentless master. The most pitiful object in this world is a man who is a slave to sin, betraying his helplessness, as his struggle grows weaker and his will becomes flabby, while the strength of his character disappears. Moreover this slavery to sin is quite as much a fact in many lives that do not betray it in those outward acts which are commonly condemned by

conscientious people. One may have gold enough to fill his grave, or be a social leader of national fame, or shine with the intellectual brilliance of Shakespeare, and yet be a veritable slave to sin, to which he has surrendered in self-will. And he knows it, though he be unwilling to admit his helplessness to realize spiritual health, purity of heart, righteousness of character in the sight of God. John touches the explanation of the condemnation of all such in his gospel, 3: 18-20, "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."

It is of supreme importance that we realize just what occurs as men go on in sin. We have a common expression which is unfortunate. We talk of "breaking the law of God," whereas no man can break God's law, for God himself is in his law. What happens when we disobey his law is that we break our characters at the point of our disobedience. We speak of a man with broken health. The statement is accurate. He did not break God's law of health; but when he disobeyed that law, he broke his health. Just so we cannot break God's law of purity; but when we disobey it, we break our purity. Could we but realize this tremendous truth adequately, surely it would have a restraining effect upon our thought and decision in the face of many a temptation.

One of our poets has pictured one who was gifted in many ways, but who went on in sin, until

"As some ill-guided bark, well built and tall,  
Which angry tides cast out on desert shore,  
And then, retiring, left it there to rot  
And molder in the winds and rains of heaven,  
So he, cut from the sympathies of life,  
And cast ashore from pleasure's boisterous surge,  
A wandering, weary, worn and wretched thing,  
A scorched and desolate and blasted soul,  
A gloomy wilderness of dying thought,  
Repined and groaned and withered from the earth."

"The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6: 23). When disease only reaches the body, after a healed soul is set free, release soon comes into "the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8: 21). But when the disease of sin claims both body and spirit, there is hopeless slavery.

PRAYER: *"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin."*

#### **Fourth Day: If Out of Christ, We Have Forfeited Our Sonship**

A strategic point of view from which to study man's need of God's forgiving love is the 15th chapter of Luke's gospel. Two facts stand out in the story of the prodigal son, who is trying to satisfy his hungry heart with the husks of the world: First, that man, as a child of God, has forfeited his sonship by his sin of self-will and consequent disobedience. There is a sense in which we are created children of God. Paul emphasizes this in his sermon at Athens (Acts 17: 28): "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring." But the prodigal who had gone off in a way of his own choosing, turning his back upon his father's love, had no claim upon that father which he could press as a right. He could only confess his utter unworthiness and plead for merciful forgiveness. The second outstanding fact is the unchanging love of that faithful father, who was ready to forgive the penitent boy and restore him to full sonship again.

The most revolutionary truth Christ taught to man was that regarding the Fatherhood of God. In Christ's time no Jew was allowed to take the name of Jehovah on his lips. Children were taught another name to use instead. When Christ began to talk familiarly and lovingly about God as his Father, as in John 6: 32-47, the astonishment of his disciples was great. When he taught them to pray "Our Father" (Matt. 6: 9, seq.) they little dreamed how potent those two words would be in the uplifting of the race. They first thought of God as Christ's Father. That was a momentous day when Peter declared: "Thou art the Christ, the Son



of the living God" (Matt. 16: 16). They could realize the Fatherhood of God for Christ, because they saw the sonship of God in Christ. And then he led them to see how the Father wanted them to come back into the sonship. That story of the forgiven prodigal son was a marvelous picture to them, as it should be to all of us. Could such a Father's love be theirs? And ours? How well they knew what the wayward son thought of his miserable husks! How their desires ran along the line of his purpose to arise and go to his father!

As Christ gave to them a vision of the forbearing, forgiving, redeeming love of God our Father in the heavenlies, a new hope, a new longing, a new faith, a new joy bathed their hungry souls with a strange, new sense of unspeakable gratitude toward God, which was the beginning of a responsive love for God, because he had thus first loved them (I John 3: 1-3, and 4: 7-10). How this blessed truth should bring us to realize our miserable condition apart from God! So long as we are out of Christ, we prove that we have not repented of our self-will, betrayed in all sorts of sin, often the more subtle kind not so easily confessed because we imagine that it is not so heinous in the sight of men; and the more overt kind, which all men condemn and which we are constrained to confess more readily for that reason, though it may not be as heinous in God's sight as our self-righteousness, which is only a "soiled garment" (Isa. 64: 6). The only right thing for us to do, in honest penitence for our sin, and in eager faith in Christ, as he opens to us the way of pardon and restoration, is to say with that prodigal of long ago, "I will arise and go to my Father!"

*PRAYER: I come in Christ, as Thy wayward child, O God, my Father. Quicken in me a sense of my great need of Thee. Give me a clear vision of Thy forgiving love, and constrain me to seek Thy présence forevermore.*

### **Fifth Day: Though Saved, We Still Are Tempted and Tried**

Even when the lost has found a guide, and the sin-sick has accepted a physician, and the slave has rejoiced in a redeemer, and the forgiven son is again in the Father's house, still the need of

man continues. He has three persistent foes—the world, the flesh, and the devil. The “old man” does not give way readily to the “new man in Christ.” The regenerating power of God has implanted a new life principle in the soul, but the whole life is transformed slowly, as a rule, into the likeness of Christ. Sometimes the Christian makes a complete surrender of self to Christ. Such an one may experience a constant victory, for God has declared his abounding grace to be sufficient for all of us (II Cor. 12: 9).

The enemy persists in his attacks upon the believer, and those attacks increase in fury by just so much as the believer wins his victory in Christ. The Master said to his disciples (John 16: 33): “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” Paul wrote to the Galatians (5: 16-24) declaring that “the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh,” and urged them to “walk by the Spirit,” so that they would not “fulfil the lust of the flesh.” In the broadest sense temptation is testing. Resistant forces are always to be reckoned with. If men did not need to struggle in order to obtain bread, the race would quickly degenerate, and character would be lost in a lazy animal. Struggle is the blessed condition of strength. Temptation is the test of fidelity. Dirt must be washed away, if we would be clean. Error must be defeated, if truth shall win. Sin must be conquered, if righteousness shall crown the life.

The Scriptures abound with the truth that man may ever find in God that divine help that will enable him to conquer every temptation and grow into an increasing fellowship with Christ, knowing the joy of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Let the hesitant soul who wonders whether there is any way of victory out of weakness into strength, be reassured by this truth. But let him also emphasize the fact that our faith in God’s promised grace is necessary, for God cannot give regardless of our eager readiness to receive (I John 5: 4). Paul urges the Corinthians (II Cor. 2: 14) to be thankful “unto God who always leadeth us in triumph in Christ.” Moreover we read in Rev. 12: 11, that “they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony, and they loved not their life even unto death.” Here we have briefly given us the explanation of victory over temptation available for us by the grace of God. Note “the word of their

testimony," for we are to dwell at length on the significance of that in this book.

A young girl in her teens was listening at the table to a conversation on the subject of the victorious life. Quietly she said: "Father, I am living the victorious life." Surprised, her father asked: "And what do you do when your temptation comes?" "Oh, that is very simple," she said, "for Jesus always lives in my heart, and when the devil comes with his temptation, I just say: 'Dear Lord, will you please go to the door?' Then just as soon as the devil sees who is at the door, he says: 'Oh, excuse me, I am at the wrong place.' Then I have no more trouble for awhile." Could anyone outgrow the simplicity and efficacy of that sort of "abiding" life? It is possible for all.

PRAYER: *O Christ, Thou hast won this victory for me. Grant that I may rest by faith in Thy victory, until I know what Paul knew when he said: "I live, yet not I; but Christ liveth in me."*

### **Sixth Day: Since Christ Has Saved Us, We Owe All to Him**

There is an old hymn whose refrain contains a great truth in a single line—"Jesus paid it all: all to him I owe." Paul urges the easy-going Corinthians (I Cor. 6: 19, 20) to realize that "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price"; "therefore," he says, "glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." This is the constraint upon us which should draw out our highest allegiance to our Redeemer. In the slave market in Cairo a swarthy Egyptian was on the block. An Englishman began to bid for him. The Egyptian knew it was against the British law for an Englishman to own slaves, and a strong feeling of resentment sprang up in his breast against his would-be master. The Englishman bought him and disappeared. The slave waited and wondered. After a time, his new master returned and handed him a piece of paper, with the words, "This is your emancipation. I love to see men free." Then giving him some money, he said: "Now go and be a man." The long-time slave, as he realized what had occurred, experienced a complete revulsion of feeling toward

his redeemer, and a great inexpressible gratitude filled his face with a new love and a sudden, strong sense of allegiance, as he cried: "Oh, do you mean that I am now free to do whatever I desire to do?" "Yes, that is what I mean," was the reply. "Well, there is just one thing I want to do. I want to serve you all the rest of my life!" Ah, yes. That was his highest liberty. And just that spirit must have place in the heart of every true Christian who appreciates something of what Christ has done for us.

We have recently witnessed a noble spirit of enlistment revealed by millions of men in different parts of the world. Several motives have had place in connection with this experience. Some have been promoted by the worthy motive of defending all that is dear to them, their homes, their loved ones, as well as their own lives. Some have been challenged by their love of country, revealing a splendid patriotism in their readiness to defend their native or adopted land against threatened invasion or serious loss. Some have caught a still higher vision, and have seen the welfare of all humanity at stake, and have given themselves eagerly to the great cause of human liberty, ready to die, with a smile if need be, for that worthy cause. In this experience we have a striking example of that eager spirit of enlistment which should mark the attitude of every intelligent and loyal Christian. The Cause of Christ is the noblest known to men. Every true believer is a citizen in the kingdom of God. The same motives that quicken the spirit of patriotism, as a citizen of one's earthly country, must quicken also a like spirit of allegiance to the greater cause of the kingdom of God, for as his children "our citizenship is in the heavenlies."

Surely no thoughtful, honest person can think through the considerations presented in this Study, without realizing that the only hope of the individual and of the race is Jesus Christ. He stands before each one who has not yet accepted him, saying: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him" (Rev. 3: 20). Moreover, he says: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6: 37). Put away hesitation. Make the decision now, and say to him, "Just as I am, O Lamb of God, I come."

*PRAYER: Help me, O Christ, to follow my decision to take Thee*

*for my Saviour, with the prayer of Saul of Tarsus, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"*

### **Seventh Day: Suggestions for the Class**

This Study demands an earnest examination of one's self. The only way to realize any man's need is to realize my own. The purpose of the Study is to make clear the need and the way for every living soul to accept Christ and enlist under his banner, who is our only Saviour and who seeks to be our only Lord and Master. One of the highest motives for that enlistment is the desire to be used of God in winning others to Christ, that they may share with us the blessings of his salvation and the privileges of his service. Thus this first Study serves in a special way as an introduction to all that follows.

1. How would you describe a lost soul? What did the young lawyer need to realize? What is Paul's philosophy of the lost condition of men? What does Christ bring to the lost? Give instances of the universal need of humanity for such a guide to God as Christ proves to be.

2. What words in this reading involve the nature of things in human life? How would you distinguish between sin and guilt? Why are most people so slow to admit their helplessness because of sin, and their need of a divine Saviour? Do you realize and admit your own need of Christ?

3. What would you say constitutes slavery to sin? Why is the case of a gifted man all the more pitiful, if a slave to sin, without Christ? What is the correct statement to make about breaking God's law? How far does sin work death?

4. What is Christ's purpose in teaching the parable of Luke 15? How did Christ's followers come to the appreciation of the Fatherhood of God? Are you ready to make the decision of the wayward son?

5. How much is involved in the largest application of the term "temptation"? Why is a Christian not free from temptations and trials and struggles against resistant forces? What do the Scriptures teach about God's provision whereby we have the victory over all trials? Tell the story of the girl who lived the victorious life. Have you tried her method?



6. Why do we owe everything to Christ? Tell the story of the Egyptian slave. What lesson should we learn from instances of modern patriotism? Have you taken Christ as your Lord and Saviour? If not, why not?

PRAYER: *Help me, O Christ, to realize fully my need of Thee, and my helplessness without Thee. Then give me grace to take Thee for salvation and for service, ever resting in Thee by faith for victory in every experience of life.*

## STUDY II

### WE ARE SAVED TO SERVE

#### First Day: Every One Is Serving—Who Is the Master?

The apostle Paul must have startled the Roman Christians to whom he was writing, when he asked them this striking question: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Rom. 6: 16.) They must have been startled because it is evident from that statement of Paul that every one of us is a servant of one of these masters. The question is as to who or what is the master. Each one of us is yielding his or her life either to the mastery of sin or to the mastery of Christ. It is not a question as to what we have professed to be doing, but it is a question as to what is occurring in the daily life.

Some people have a strange idea to the effect that a surrendered life is one in which we forfeit our liberty and our individuality. By no means! Every one is living the surrendered life, yielding either to the service of sin, or yielding to the obedience of Christ. The vital question is: To which of these are you yielding, to which are you giving your desires, to which are you surrendering your will? All true liberty is under law. Otherwise it becomes license. Which law is controlling your life? Is it the law of sin and death? Or is it the law of life in Christ Jesus, which makes us free from the law of sin and death? (Rom. 8: 2.) A man may decide that he will not make his will. By that very decision he makes his will, for he lives under a law of the State which gives him the liberty to make his will as he may prefer. But if he refuse to exercise his liberty under the law, the same law decides what shall become of his property. Exactly so some people imagine they can go on without making a decision as to their relation to Jesus Christ. By that very choice they have made their decision about Christ as their Saviour, or as their Master in daily service. They have yielded

their lives to sin, rather than to Christ. And in so doing they have refused to exercise their highest freedom.

Let it be clearly realized that every person's temptation is *exactly* like the temptation of Jesus, "Cast thyself down!" (Matt. 4: 6.) That is always the temptation that you face—"Cast thyself down!" For no one ever went down who did not first decide to do so. Whatever excuses you may have made to your accusing conscience, whatever resolve that it would be just for that once, when you went down it was because you decided to go down, to cast yourself down. You yielded to the slavery of sin at that moment, and to the obedience which is unto death. And you knew it. How evident it is, in the very nature of things, that we are saved by Jesus Christ in order that we shall evermore yield our lives to him in the obedience of righteousness unto life eternal. And this is not primarily to the end that we should do his will for his sake; but it is because only thus can we enter into the high possibilities that come with the blessings of obedience to his holy will. It is his glory to will for our good. Hence when we seek to glorify him, we are always receiving the best blessing for ourselves.

*PRAYER: Thy law, O God, reveals its blessings to all who obey, and makes it perfectly clear that when we disobey we miss the blessing. Help me, therefore, to yield myself gladly, fully, to serve Thee in my body and spirit in fullest loyalty.*

## Second Day: The Problem of Self-Denial

Whenever we think of self-denial, we must always ask ourselves this supremely important question, Which self? For there are two selves, the lower self of the appetites and desires on the level of the things of the flesh, and the higher self of the aspirations in the noble realm of moral and spiritual values. These are the two selves which Paul has in mind, when he writes in Rom. 8: 5-14, "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit." Read the entire passage in which the apostle traces these two tendencies in our human experience. It is most helpful to every honest life that has caught a vision of what is truly worth while in the realm of human possibilities.

Ordinarily when the subject of self-denial is mentioned, most people think at once of the hardships involved in denying the lower self. It is not usual for most Christians to think of the poverty of spirit which follows the indulgence of the lower self along the lines of the appetites and the things of the flesh, or even the realm of the intellect, in all of which there may be no thought given to the needs of the nobler self in the realm of the spirit. Thus thousands are satisfying the lower self and starving their higher natures. That is to say, while indulging the lower self there is always the denial of the spirit. We say "Yes" to the lower self, and forget that in so doing we are saying "No" to the longings of the spirit. On the other hand, when we say "No" faithfully to the desires of the lower self, we are releasing the soul from the slavery of self, indulging the aspirations that reach up to God and enriching our natures in the fellowship of Christ.

Now mark the vital fact that when we thus deny the lower self and satisfy the longings of the higher, we have no thought of hardship because we must forego the pleasures of the flesh, which are the only pleasures that some people know. A newspaper reporter was interviewing a bishop in the city of New York, who was there for a time on a special errand. The reporter was in a hurry, for he was planning to play the races that afternoon at Sheepshead Bay. The fine personality of the bishop impressed him. Here was a type of man with which he was not familiar. Finally he asked: "Bishop, do you ever play the races?" The bishop kindly replied that he never had that experience. Somewhat surprised, the reporter said: "But you surely attend the races occasionally." When assured that the bishop had no time for this pastime, he confidently said: "But you surely go to the theater." When the bishop said he had no time for theater-going, the reporter was manifestly astonished, and sincerely exclaimed: "But, bishop, what in the world do you do?" Think of the poverty of manhood which that young man revealed! He would have deemed life not worth living if he had been compelled to deny himself all these pleasures. But imagine what impoverishing of his nobler self the bishop would have experienced if he had gone down from his level where he was realizing the high calling of God for him in Christ Jesus, in the realm of moral and spiritual and eternal values. Further comment

is unnecessary. To which of these two classes of people do you belong? Toward which attitude of life are you growing as the years pass? From which of these two classes are you moving into the other? Everyone is moving in one of these directions.

*PRAYER: O Christ, who didst empty Thyself and go to the cross for my salvation, help me to realize Thy joy beyond Thy cross, when Thou didst ascend to the throne of God.*

### Third Day: Service and Power

Another consideration of vital importance is connected with these experiences of service and self-denial. That is the fact that only service and self-denial can develop power in any sphere. Every one has a desire for some kind of power. We recognize power as essential to success. We also know that there are various kinds of power and various kinds of success. There are two realms of power: one is the realm of having, the other is the realm of being. There is power that goes with knowledge, keen thinking, foresight and insight, intelligent grasp of truth and the ability to apply it. This power is in the realm of being, though it reaches to the realm of having. Then there is power that goes with money, securing various things which are not in the realm of being. Money can never buy anything in the realm of being. Other conditions must be met in order to success in building character, which is the distinctive business in the realm of being. Note that in the Beatitudes (Matt. 5: 1-12) Christ teaches that the Blessed Life is never in the realm of having, but always in the realm of being.

It has been said that the world has not yet seen the man who has so fully given himself to God that God could trust him with very much of divine power. What sincere Christian can ponder that thought without an instant prayer in his heart? For just to the extent that a man truly, unreservedly, gives his life to God, it is absolutely certain that God will give his power to that man. The law involved in this statement is written in every realm of power. God says to the boatman: "Obey my law of the wind, and serve me faithfully by setting your sails according to my law, and you may go anywhere you wish, for I will give you all the power of the wind." It is his universal law. "The righteous . . . shall hold



on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger" (Job 17:9). There was Marconi asking himself how he could discover the way to obey God's law more perfectly in the realm of electricity, for he knew that if he should yield himself more completely in obedience to that law some new power of electricity would be his reward. So he toiled on day after day in the spirit of a servant who was eager to obey more perfectly the law, under which he might find larger freedom, until—one day, lo! A vision! Wireless telegraphy and a richer world!

It is supremely true of the realm of spiritual power. It is the very thought of our Lord in Acts 1: 8, where the conditions to be met are given in connection with the promise of power. He ever says to each believer: "By just so much as you give your life unreservedly to me, I will make you a channel of my power." It is the final explanation of men like Moses and Paul and Luther and Judson and Moody. And let us not doubt that God is at this moment using every one of us as much as we have been willing to yield ourselves unreservedly to him at every point of our desires. By just so much as God is not using us now, it is because self, in some form, is on the throne instead of Christ. It was this perfect obedience, as described by Paul in Phil. 2: 8, that explains that other fact recorded by Matthew (28: 18), that Christ said to his disciples: "All power is given unto me." The Church needs nothing so much as this baptism of power; but in order to receive it there must be in the lives of its members this spirit of willingness to serve in perfect obedience to God's commands.

PRAYER: *"Consecrate me now to Thy service, Lord,  
By the power of grace divine.  
Let my soul look up with a steadfast hope,  
And my will be lost in Thine."*

#### **Fourth Day: God's First Plan for Our Service**

Toward the end of his earthly ministry our Lord began to speak to his disciples about the coming of the Holy Spirit to the leadership of the Church. In John 15: 26, 27, he said: "He shall bear witness of me." Then he added to the disciples: "And ye also shall bear witness." In the Great Commission in Matt. 28: 18-20, he said

to them: "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations." Also in the classic passage in Acts 1: 1-8, frequently mentioned already in these pages, he told them to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father, promised them power when the Holy Spirit had come upon them, saying: "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Thus it is evident that it has been the hope and purpose of our Lord that his Church should be a witnessing Church.

This is God's first plan for us in Christian service. We are to be his witnesses in every part of our lives, but we are specially to be faithful in striving to "make a disciple" of every person who is out of Christ. Jesus said: "I am the light of the world" (John 9: 5): and also said to his disciples: "Ye are the light of the world" (Matt. 5: 14), evidently meaning to teach us that henceforth we are to live Christ and give Christ to all mankind. Paul urges that we are to be living epistles, "known and read of all men" (II Cor. 3: 2). The consistent life authenticates the faithful testimony. Every man who receives Christ becomes a trustee to share Christ with every other man. In the business world there is a keen sense of honor in connection with a trusteeship. When will the Christian have the same sense of honor in connection with this trust, for which he must one day give an account to God?

Note Paul's earnest plea touching this obligation in Rom. 10: 8-17, as he emphasizes the fact that the only way of salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ, and that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." One cannot doubt that one reason why God planned to save the world by witnessing and interceding believers is for the sake of the believers. It is impossible for a Christian to make much progress in a Christ-like life, who is entirely negligent of this Christian service. It would be impossible to go very far in the full fellowship of Christ, if one should be indifferent to this form of service, which Christ puts first in his program for us. Instances might be multiplied to show that when Christians began to win others to Christ, their own lives immediately became enlarged and enriched in their fellowship of service with the Master.

PRAYER: *O Master, help me to put first things first. Burden me*

*with a sense of my responsibility for lost people, and help me to be faithful to my trust.*

### **Fifth Day: The Crime of Unconcern**

Notwithstanding the plain teachings of the New Testament regarding the divine will for Christians, the fact must be confessed that the Church is not a witnessing church in anything like what our Lord intended and desires. Think of the significant fact that the Protestant Church of America has averaged only seven per cent per annum in its additions to the membership on confession of faith. And we are now in the twentieth century of the so-called Christian era. That means that for every one hundred leaders and members of the Church there are only seven new members won to the Church in a whole year! But that must also mean that hundreds of members whose names are on church rolls go on for weeks and months and years without doing a solitary thing to try to win anyone to Christ. It is this indifference that explains the fruitlessness of so many professing Christians, not simply evident in their failure to bring any sheaves into the garner, but also in the fact that they are quite complacent in their lethargy. Should we not call it the crime of unconcern? But are we at all really concerned about our own failure?

Some years ago a well-known Christian was stopped on the street by a friend, with the question, "Mr. R——, how long have we known each other?" After a moment's thought he replied: "I should think about fifteen years." "You claim to be a Christian, I believe." "Why, yes, I do." Then his friend asked "Do you really believe that I must accept Christ as my Saviour, if I am to be saved?" "Yes, I do believe that." Then the still more significant question, "Do you care whether I am saved or not?" "Why, certainly I do." "Well," said the friend, "I don't want to hurt your feelings; but I do not believe it. As you say, we have been good friends for fifteen years; yet in all these years you never once mentioned Jesus Christ to me. You are a leading Christian business man in this city, and if you had ever told me that Christ was precious to you, and that he had a right to my life, and that I needed him as my Saviour, I would have listened to you with respect. But you never did it. We have talked about everything

else under heaven; but never once have you mentioned Christ to me. Of course, when I ask you if you care whether I am saved, or not, you say you do; but don't you see that *if you had really cared one least little bit, you would have said something to me about it in fifteen years?"*

With shame and startled surprise, as he faced the fact of his actual unconcern, however much he might have professed to care, the Christian confessed that he had often dodged and shirked opportunities that God had put right in his way to speak for Christ. But that incident marked the beginning of a great change in his life, for thereafter he became a great winner of souls. Does not that incident reveal to us our actual failure in a similar way? Think of Christian work in China for a moment. Suppose a new Christian convert in China never said or did a single thing to try to win any of his neighbors to Christ. Would we not wonder whether he was truly converted, or not? But why should we expect that service from a Chinese Christian, just out of pagan darkness, when we fail in it at home? Is it also fair to question whether we are truly converted? The apostle James very frankly said: "Faith without works is dead" (2: 14-18). Christ looks for results in our lives (John 15: 1-8), and he has a right to expect them, in view of all he has done for us.

PRAYER: *Forgive my lack of sympathy, O Christ, with Thy redeeming love for lost men, and quicken in me a genuine burden for their eternal salvation, until I shall be ready to speak as Thou dost open the way.*

### Sixth Day: The Constraint of Christ's Love

The outstanding example of a Christian whose life of service was marked by a quenchless ardor for the lost, to save whom Christ died, is the apostle Paul. How stirring are his words in II Cor. 5: 14-20, where he declares: "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them (for their sakes) and rose again." "God who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation. . . . We

are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God."

How the spirit of the apostle throbs with the love of Christ for a lost world! And this spirit has been manifest in every life that has felt the constraining love of Christ. Hear the following plea from the Rev. Charles Inwood: "The sobbing of a thousand million of poor heathen sounds in my ear and moves my heart; and I try to measure, as God helps me, something of their darkness, something of their blank misery, something of their despair. Oh, think of these needs. I say again they are ocean depths; and, beloved, in my Master's name, I want you to measure them, I want you to think earnestly about them, I want you to look at them until they appall you, until you cannot sleep." John Wesley declared: "I look upon the world as my parish; thus far, I mean, that in whatever part of it I am, I judge it my bounden duty to declare unto all that are willing to hear the glad tidings of salvation." It was said of him that "He was at it and always at it." Like Wesley, he who tastes the joy of winning one soul to Christ will seek another, and still another, while any remain who are not saved.

Charles G. Finney is one of the most prominent Americans whose life revealed this same spirit. It is pathetic to know that when he first became concerned about his soul's welfare, he was greatly hindered by the indifference and inconsistencies of professing Christians. "How can Christianity be worth while," he thought, "if this is its product?" But God met his need, and when he became a Christian it was no half-way sort; and no one ever doubted God's power to save a man through and through, when once he came to know Finney's unquenchable zeal for the lost. Oh, that we might never forget that each day our lives are either hindering or helping the people we meet to live close to Jesus Christ. Perhaps the name of Dwight L. Moody has also been in our thought as such a man of God, whose burden for souls that were out of Christ was so heavy that people who touched his life could not but feel his great concern. His burden seemed heavier than that of others, and he was toiling through many years as a witnessing Christian, making disciples of thousands, and inspiring many to new visions of God's call to lives of service. One of the conspicuous instances of such



personal inspiration is that of Dr. Grenfell, who has been so mightily used of God in Labrador.

PRAYER: *Forbid, O Christ, that I should ever be indifferent to the thought that some may never know Thee because I have been unfaithful in Thy service. Let Thy constraining love dominate my life until I shall desire nothing so much as to be used of Thee for the saving of the lost.*

### **Seventh Day: Suggestions for the Class**

The Gospel cannot find its full expression until all men enjoy "the glorious liberty of the children of God." The distinctive mark of this spirit is a new concern for individual men. This concern has been the explanation of every forward movement in the Protestant world since the Reformation. We sometimes hear of the next revival in the Church. It will only come as the others came.

1. What is the truth touching the service that every life is rendering? To whom, or to what, are you yielding your own life? How must we define true liberty? What was Christ's temptation, which is also ours? What follows when one thinks he can refuse to decide about Christ?

2. When we think of self-denial, what question must we ask? Define these two "selves." When are we experiencing self-denial in each case? Tell the story of the bishop and the reporter.

3. Why does everyone desire power? What are the two realms of power? What is the condition of having the power of God in our lives? Illustrate the law which obtains in this matter. Mention some words of Christ which point to his obedience and to his power.

4. Mention the Scripture that indicates the will of God, as Christ made it plain, for the Church's life of service. What is true in the business world when men recognize a trust? Does this same sense of honor obtain in the life of the average Christian? Give a special reason why God planned to have believers do this work.

5. What is the record of the Protestant Church as to additions on confession of faith? What must this mean as regards most members of the churches? Tell the story of the Christian whose

friend questioned his statement that he cared whether or not the friend was saved. What would we think of a Christian convert in China who never spoke to anyone about his faith in Christ? Should we think the same about ourselves?

6. Where do we find Paul's great statement concerning the constraining love of Christ? What is the special thought in the statement of Charles Inwood? What hindered Charles G. Finney when he became concerned about his spiritual welfare? What did men believe about Moody as the distinctive fact in his life? Name one Christian who was inspired by Moody to his great life-work.

*Prayer: Help me, O Christ, to conquer any unconcern for a lost world that puts me out of sympathy with Thy supreme service for mankind.*

### STUDY III

## REALIZING GOD'S REDEEMING LOVE

### First Day: God's Valuation of an Immortal Soul

The value of a lost soul makes its shipwreck so terrible. The question of Christ mentioned in the first day of our first Study, recorded in Mark 8: 36, 37, indicates God's measure of that value. The whole world of material riches sinks down below the spiritual worth of one human life. Hence we can the better appreciate the joy of heaven, which Christ describes in Luke 15, whenever a soul is saved. If only indifferent Christians could realize this supreme value of each human life in God's sight, what a difference it would make in the thought and activity of the Church!

Our Lord once told those who were listening to him that a wise man would always sit down and count the cost before undertaking an important enterprise (Luke 14: 28-32). Must we not, therefore, realize how Christ himself counted the cost when he faced the task of leaving his throne of glory and coming down to live his life against misunderstandings and persecutions, and dying the death of the cross? Yes, he counted the full cost of it all, and then he came. To the two disciples going to Emmaus he said (Luke 24: 26), "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" We must also realize that such eager giving of himself is but a part of the love of God to which Christ referred in John 3: 16, so familiar and yet so profound that no man can measure its meaning. Paul declares to the Romans (5: 8) that "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

It is the great theme of the New Testament. In I John 4: 10, the beloved disciple declares: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." This is realizing the redeeming love of God. But Paul and John knew it only because they had been saved by the

power of that love from the old life of sin and self. No man can quicken in his hearers an appreciation of that love, except as he reveals the power of a personal testimony to the fact that God had redeemed him by grace divine.

A dear friend of the writer was an ordinary church member for years, and was useful in service as the average Christian is. But one day he discovered that he had never experienced the power of God's grace in his life. He developed a great longing for this deeper experience of God's power to give a blessed victory to believers. He was led from point to point until the light flooded his whole being. Today when he rises to speak all who hear and know him realize that he is a very different Christian from what he once was. God is using him marvelously to help others to know the victorious life. Could you be satisfied with less?

*PRAYER: Touch my inmost life with the sense of all Thou hast done for me, O Christ, so that I may realize Thy wondrous love in such a way that I may be enabled to help others to realize its redeeming power.*

## **Second Day: God's Compassion for Men**

The most important truth for men to know is that God is concerned about us. Christ's revelation of the Father's love breathes the teaching continually that God cares for us individually, as in Matt. 6: 25-33. This divine concern necessarily follows in view of the value which God places upon every human life. The only philosophy of life that will ever satisfy a thinking man must teach that God is vitally participating in every experience of men, our joys, our sufferings, our struggles, seeking ever to deliver and purify and strengthen us, just as an earthly father enters into the experiences and the discipline of his children. Two great truths have been specially emphasized in our generation about God: his Fatherhood and his immanency. Modern science has stressed the latter. Both demand that we shall realize that the only truly scientific appreciation of these truths must see that God is in every life and every part of that life. Instead of trying to explain away God, the scientific emphasis of the presence of an immanent Father

must insist upon his immediate and constant activity in everything all the time.

There are two very striking questions to be found on the very first pages of the Bible. They are (Gen. 3: 9), "Where art thou?" and (Gen. 4: 9), "Where is thy brother?" They stress the fact that the Christian Scriptures are the only sacred writings of mankind which teach that *God is seeking men*. All other sacred writings show men seeking God, as Paul says (Acts 17: 27), feeling after him, "if haply they might find him," but never indicating that they have succeeded in finding him. Dr. George Adam Smith says truly: "The divine essence of the Bible consists in this—the marvelous story, how it tells us that this moral warfare of ours is shared by God Himself, that the divine nature descended into that warfare, that it bears the agony of strife, nay, the shame and curse of it!—all for man's salvation. . . . That is why the Bible will always be the indispensable force to man's salvation." And let us note well that the second of these two questions involves us in God's task. Today he is still asking of each of us the question that he put to Cain: "Where is thy brother?" Cain tried to evade the responsibility involved in that question, but he could not. So some of us are trying now to evade it, but we cannot. We must answer God.

The great key word in the gospel record which opens this truth to us is the word *compassion*. Three instances will suffice to make this plain. First, in Mark 8: 2, where Christ said he had "compassion on the multitude," for they had been three days with nothing to eat. In another place we are told that "they were like sheep without a shepherd." The second is in Luke 10: 33, where our Lord explains the lovingkindness of the Good Samaritan by telling us that "When he saw him, he was moved with compassion." The third is in Luke 15: 20, where the father's love for his prodigal, now penitent, boy is revealed in this same spirit, "While he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." Let us remember that the deepest meaning of the word indicates "suffering with." As we ponder these utterances of our Saviour, and realize the spirit of redeeming love that throbs in them, we recall the words also of Paul and John noted in the first day of this Study, magnifying that



same redeeming love. This is bringing us to understand that striking phrase, "the dying love of Christ."

*PRAYER: Let not hardship, or disappointment, or sorrow, blind my heart to Thy love for me, my Father. But make it so real to me that in every trial I shall have the light of a blessed hope shining clear, bringing comfort and peace.*

### Third Day: God's Destiny for Men

From the beginning God's plan has always been the same for men. We see it in his purpose in creation, "Let us make man, in our image, after our likeness" (Gen. 1: 26). And when that image was blurred because of sin, God never lost sight of the destiny which he always planned for us, as we are taught by Paul in Rom. 8: 29, "For whom he foreknew, he also foreordained (predestinated) to be conformed to the image of his Son." And the Son had realized the purpose which God had for us at creation, for we read in Heb. 1: 3 that the Son is the brightness of the glory of the Father, and "the express image of his person." To realize this plan for us all the work of Christ was inaugurated, both the truth brought to us in his life and teaching, and the redemptive work of atoning love accomplished on Calvary for us. While that part of it is "finished," it is he who now "is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8: 34). Paul notes the working out of God's plan in all who have come unto him in Christ. "We all with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord are transformed into the same image from glory to glory [of character], even as from the Lord the Spirit" (II Cor. 3: 18).

To realize this plan, man would always have needed God, even if sin had not entered. But with sin's entrance the distinctive feature in God's plan is a provision for man's salvation from sin. The statement at this point is the well-known utterance of John 3: 16, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Christ voiced the constraint upon the divine love in this redeeming work to the two companions on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24: 26): "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?" He counted the cost and came, for he knew it would

be worth while to open the pathway everlasting to all believers who would walk in that with him, and one day realize the high destiny which God planned for us all along.

A glorious glimpse of the consummation of that plan for us is given in the book of Revelation (5: 9, 13): "They sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. . . . And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Paul describes it with equally striking words in Eph. 4: 13: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

*PRAYER: O Divine Shepherd, help me to realize that "none of the ransomed ever knew how dark was the night which the Lord passed through ere he found his sheep that was lost," and give me grace to enter into the fullness of Thy plan for me.*

#### **Fourth Day: God's Gift of Grace**

In our Lord's Olivet discourse (Matt. 25: 34), he gives us a glimpse into the truth that God's redeeming love was at work long before the actual occasion occurred for its manifestation to men. There he tells us the King will say "unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." The divine record indicates that from the very beginning of the race the light of God's grace was shining upon mankind. Every law of God in all nature proves to be an expression of divine love, for it means only blessing when it is obeyed. Its light shines even brighter when the law is disobeyed, because its teaching is even plainer than before that when we obey we have the blessing, but when we disobey we miss the blessing. But light cannot avail unless there be eyes to see, and when the heart is darkened (Rom. 1: 21), then even the

light that one had has become darkness, as Christ emphasized in Matt. 6: 23. But the light never ceased shining. Grace was eagerly ready, as Paul tells us in Rom. 5: 20, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

God was eagerly looking for a man who would open his eyes to the light of divine grace. A few men here and there saw its gleaming, and turned to walk in the way of its leading. Enoch caught the vision of the ongoing of the soul with God, at the end of the earthly sojourn, and we read, in Gen. 5: 24, that he "walked with God, and he was not, for God took him." The writer to the Hebrews (11: 5) tells us it was by faith that he "was translated that he should not see death; . . . for he had this testimony that he pleased God." Noah also walked with God (Gen. 6: 8-22). He was a preacher of righteousness and one of God's builders of character who stood alone against the world in loyal obedience to God and his commandment, trusting the promises of God, in spite of the unbelief of those about him. Abraham also looms large in the perspective of man's religious history. It was he who stood alone against the idolatry of his day, having caught a vision of the sublime truth that God is a Spirit, and that life has its supreme values in the realm of the spirit. He turned to God, in splendid faith, as the leader of his daily life, denying self, prevailing in prayer (Gen. 12: 1-4). Read also Heb. 11: 8-12.

Two men stand out in the history of Israel in Egypt, Joseph and Moses. Joseph revealed a very precious experience of the constant presence of God, and the sufficiency of the divine grace available for a man of faith and obedience (Gen. 41 and 45). Moses was the towering personality in all the history of Israel. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews (11: 25-27) seizes upon the most significant fact about him, in the statement, "esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt . . . for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." Thus we have glimpses of God's grace through the years, unfolding in law and promise, in psalm and prophecy, in fellowship with men of faith and obedience, condemning sin, raising up deliverers for his people, pointing forward to his promised Saviour, as in Isa. 53 and Isa. 35. Note how these men of God were burdened for the souls of the people, pleading in intercession for them when they turned away

from God, and eagerly bringing messages of promised mercy when they would return to God and live. Isaiah seemed to be conspicuous among the prophets as having the vision of God's redeeming love one day to be fulfilled in the promised Messiah.

*PRAYER: "Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. . . . So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."*

### **Fifth Day: God's Gift of Christ**

With all that men were able to take of God's grace, the blur of sin was upon the human vision, and it was not enough. It was necessary that God should be perfectly revealed to men in a human life. Hence it was necessary for God himself to come down and become incarnate in a man. It was God the Son who came for this purpose. John tells us in his gospel (1: 1-14) of the coming of the Son, and he uses a striking statement about him: "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Now for the first time we have that word "full." Paul tells us, in II Cor. 4: 6, how God "hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Let us realize beyond question that it was absolutely necessary for the Word to become flesh. It is a universal law that every word must be made flesh before its value can be realized in human life. It must be brought down into human experience, into the daily life, into our actual comprehension, or we cannot possess its meaning and worth. Consider the word of electricity. For centuries it had a great message for men of power that God was waiting to give us, but no man could read that word. Men only thought of it as a bolt of destruction from a god of vengeance. One day Franklin caught a little of its message, and others spelled into it a little further. Edison and Tesla and Marconi have read much further into it, until we have something of its power in heat and light and motive force. But just to the point that it has been made flesh is it ours. Beyond that point it eludes us still. Exactly so must it be with every word of truth, of light, of love. It must be made flesh, Hence when it was necessary for men to know

the sufficient truth about God's redeeming love, because no mere man could make that truth flesh, Christ came and gave us the fullness of that revelation, in so far as we are able to receive it.

Christ meets every human need. Christ is the Guide to the lost. Christ is the Physician to the sin-sick. Christ is the Redeemer of the slave to sin. Christ is the revealer of the Father's forgiving, redeeming love to the wayward children. Paul gives us a point of view in II Cor. 5: 19, when he tells us that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." Again he tells us, in Rom. 6: 23, that "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Put over against all human need this fact of God's abundant provision for every one of these needs, even to the gift of eternal life, and who can refrain from the exulting, jubilant exclamation of Paul (II Cor. 9: 15), "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!" For in giving us Christ, God hath given us "richly all things to enjoy" (I Tim. 6: 17).

**PRAYER:** *Help me to receive Thee, O Christ, that I may have power to become a son of God. Enable me to lay hold on eternal life, whereunto I am also called.*

## Sixth Day: God's Gift of the Holy Spirit

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory; but the flesh is temporal and local. God's plan is for all men and for all time. Therefore a local Christ would not suffice. He accomplished the work which the Father gave him to do here in the flesh, and then he returned "up where he was before" (John 6: 62). But before returning to the throne, he promised to send another Comforter, the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, who would abide with them and us forever (John 14: 16, 17 and 26) and would bring all things to their remembrance that Christ had said unto them. He commanded them (Acts 1: 4) to wait in Jerusalem for the fulfilment of the promise. They waited and prayed and wondered. Finally the day of manifestation and fulfilment came (Acts 2: 1-8) and the marvelous power of God rested upon them.

Note well the meaning of the coming of the Holy Spirit to the disciples. Christ had said to them (John 16: 13, 14): "He shall not speak of himself . . . for he shall receive of mine and shall



show it unto you." Their first thought, as the mighty power of God came upon them, was that Christ had kept his promise, that he was at the throne of power, that he had come back by his Spirit to abide with them and work through them. Peter in his Pentecostal sermon reviewed the story of God's promised Messiah, whom the Jews had rejected and crucified, but whom God had raised from the dead and exalted to his right hand of glory. Then he exclaimed. *He, he*, the living glorified Christ, "hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear" (Acts 2: 33). In this faith they went forth to be his witnesses. At the Beautiful gate of the Temple, Peter cried to the lame man: "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." Down at Lydda (Acts 9: 34), he cried again to the paralytic: "*Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole.*" Thus we are to understand the atmosphere of the beginnings of the Christian Church under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. The risen, glorified Christ was its life and power.

Paul writes to the Galatians (5: 22, 23), that the fruits of the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit are: "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." To sanctify is to make holy, whole, wholesome. In other words, the work of the Spirit makes us to be more like Christ, who is the complete, whole life. Thus God consummates his provision for human souls in the gift of the Holy Spirit. There is nothing more that God can do for us. It now remains for us to appropriate his gifts. Just at this point we must most carefully consider Christ's words about the work of the Spirit (John 16: 8-11): "When he is come he will reprove (convict) the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment." Note—"Of *sin*, because they believe not on me." Right here we have the explanation of the failure on the part of so many to appropriate God's gift of Christ. Note again—"Of *righteousness*, because I go to my Father." We have no final argument to prove Christ's righteousness to human pride of intellect. The Holy Spirit works this conviction in human lives. Note once more—"Of *judgment*, because the prince of this world is judged." Do not expect to see it by looking about you. This also the Holy Spirit must make evident to you. By the word of God, Satan is already a defeated foe, although the battle continues. The end is certain. Christ is on the throne.

PRAYER: *Speak to me, O Christ, as Thou didst once speak in the flesh to Thy disciples, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit." Then help me to give him full place in my life, as my constant guide and helper.*

## Seventh Day: Suggestions for the Class

Every Christian should be intelligently informed regarding the facts set forth in the three Studies which close with this day's review. It is of vital importance that we should be familiar with the brief, yet helpful statements in this third Study regarding God's plan for men and his provision to meet all human needs, in the salvation of men and their leadership in service.

1. What does Christ teach regarding God's valuation of a human life? How is this divine appreciation of man's value emphasized by the fact that Christ came to save us? What shall we say of Christ's counting the cost before he came? Give some notable statements of Scripture which magnify God's redeeming love. What difference will it make with a witness for Christ when he can speak of God's grace out of his own real experience? Have you had the personal experience yourself?

2. What is Christ's teaching about God's concern for each of us? What two questions are mentioned as found on the very first pages of the Bible? What do they teach about the Bible, in contrast to all other sacred writings? What three instances are quoted from the gospels to indicate God's compassion for lost and needy men?

3. What was God's plan from the beginning for man? Quote the Scripture to show this. Also the Scripture that shows God's purpose to have been ever the same. When sin entered, what element in God's plan became specially prominent? What statements from John and Paul give us a glimpse of the final realization of God's plan for man's destiny?

4. When did God's plan for our redemption have its beginning? Who were the men mentioned in this Study who received God's grace in a conspicuous way during the Old Testament times? Mention the point of importance stated in connection with the experience of each man.

5. Why was Christ's incarnation necessary? Give the two reasons stated. Give the illustration about the word of electricity

becoming flesh. At what points does Christ meet human needs? What should be our attitude toward God for the gift of Christ?

6. Why was it necessary for the Holy Spirit to come to the leadership of the Church? What was the great, constantly inspiring truth which made the distinctive atmosphere of the early Church? What are the fruits of the Spirit? What three distinctive things does the Holy Spirit do for men?

*Prayer: We thank Thee, O God, for Thy great redeeming love. Help us to prove our gratitude by our fidelity.*

## STUDY IV

### ENLISTING OTHERS

#### First Day: Hesitation to Attempt This Work

From the beginning men have hesitated to obey the call of God to definite service for him. A notable instance is that of Moses (Exodus 3: 10-18), where God called him to go to Egypt to be his messenger in the deliverance of the Israelites. God told Moses that they would heed his message (Exodus 3: 18), but Moses refused to believe God, and insisted that they would not (Exodus 4: 1). The story is familiar; but let it be noted that God did not accept the excuses Moses offered for not obeying him. And he will not accept ours.

The hesitation of David was for a different reason. He knew God had called him to go and fight the giant of Gath (I Sam. 17: 31-40); but his friends told him he was not prepared to do it. He must put on Saul's armor. But it was not the natural way for David. Artificial preparation may well lead us to hesitate. Let us just be natural in God's hands. It was thus that David finally went, and God used him, giving him a splendid victory over the enemy. We sometimes think we cannot be like some one else, and hence hesitate to try at all. But God is able to enable us, as we trust and obey him.

The hesitation of Isaiah is most significant. He knew that God needed witnesses to the people, and he wanted to go for God, but felt unworthy. His desire was not to be excused from the duty, but it was to be cleansed and made ready by the power of God, the Holy One (Isa. 6: 1-8). As he realized the holiness of God, as never before, he also realized his own sin as never before. This was his preparation for cleansing, as it must be for all of us. Then, when the call came, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" I am sure we must think of the prophet exclaiming, as he rose to his feet: "Here am I: send me!" And he did not ask where he was to go before he said he would go. He did not ask what it

might cost to go. If only God would use him, he would seek nothing but to be used of God as his witness to the people.

The hesitation of Jonah has nothing to justify it at all. It was simply miserable shirking in disobedience (Jonah 1: 1-3). Jonah did not understand God, and so he feared him, because he did not believe that God could send him to Nineveh and give him success in his mission. So he deserted. Jonah's experience emphasizes once more the necessity of knowing God in order to serve him. Have we heard God say to us each one: "Arise, go"? Until we do, our better life has not yet begun. Jonah deliberately determined to shirk. How many of us do this continually. Many have no deep sense of duty; but many more who have will smother it if they can. Thus do many yield to the tempter.

But it was in vain for Jonah to try to disobey God and escape unhappy consequences. Moreover, the spirit of a prophet was lurking down in Jonah's heart, and he came to the moment, although weak and fearful, when he longed to confess his sin, and be forgiven, so that God could give him another chance to attempt his duty. Alas, that discipline should so often be necessary to chasten the children of God before we are ready to do the Father's will! All life is either an attempt to perform duty or to shirk it. Every deserter is trying to hide from God. Jonah's experience illustrates the folly of such an attempt. So many go down from the highest level of possible service and subsidize their fine abilities for something less worth while than the objectives which God would have us put first.

*PRAYER: Divine Master, Thou callest me to do the best thing in my contact with other lives. Let me not betray the spirit of the slacker or the deserter; but "arise and go" to whatever task Thou dost give me to do.*

## Second Day: The Need of Intelligent Preparation

Proficiency in anything is impossible without intelligent preparation and faithful practice. Could any self-evident fact be more important for constant emphasis than this, especially in the details of Christian service? For the vast majority of church members have had no intelligent preparation for this very task of personal



witnessing for Jesus Christ which he commanded us to practice. Paul urged Timothy (II Tim. 2: 15), "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed." Evidently Paul had no sympathy with the idea that we are not to do everything possible in cultivating efficiency, while all the time we depend on God for divine grace to energise us in all we attempt. Many Christians excuse themselves from attempting personal work on this ground of their unpreparedness. But the time has come to place the responsibility for this lack of preparation.

It is most encouraging to record the fact that many who thought they could not attempt this service, for lack of preparation or some other reason, have been led to study the subject. Soon they came to see that they ought to be winning others to Christ, have begun to wish they might, have taken the burden of an individual life upon their hearts in daily prayer, until one glad day they have discovered that God has used them to win the friend to Christ and the Church. Many such have become fruitful and joyful who thought they never could. They have caught a new vision of what it really means to be a Christian; their faith has been strengthened, and their taste of the joy in this service has led them to further effort and larger experience and more precious victories.

How striking is the record of the first interview that Christ had with the two young men who "followed him" and "abode with him that day"! The story, in John 1: 35-42, makes it perfectly evident that the immediate result of that fellowship with the Master was the desire and purpose to go at once and bring others to him. What a striking text for a sermon on this subject is found in verse 42, "He brought him to Jesus." Here we have individual efforts to win individuals to Christ. They had a special preparation for the beginning of their task. For three years Christ was training them for their life work. The need for the first attempt is the sense of Christ's personal constraint upon us in his love for others. As we go on in his service we shall grow in knowledge and tact and efficiency. We have also the case of Saul of Tarsus. For three days after his conversion, he was shut in alone with his Lord. Then he began to win others to Christ at Damascus. But he felt the need of a more thorough preparation and tells us he went into

Arabia, and after three years went up to Jerusalem (Acts 9: 1-22, and Gal. 1: 17, 18).

*PRAYER: Help me to be thoroughly honest with myself, O Lord. Teach me to realize what I must be and do if I would serve Thee and my fellowmen most faithfully and helpfully.*

### **Third Day: The Duty of Christian Leaders**

In the lesson for yesterday we suggested that the time has come to place the responsibility for the lack of preparation among church-members for this supremely important service of winning others to Christ and the Church. It is equally essential that they who are responsible for this great lack shall honestly face the fact, with sincere penitence of heart, and some intention to remedy the defect. God himself places the responsibility, in Eph. 4: 11, 12. Unfortunately the Authorized Version is faulty in its translation, "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Here we have the old idea of the special prerogative of the clergy, who were expected to do personal work, while the church members did practically none. Unhappily it is still an all too prevalent idea.

But that is not the will of God for the leaders of the Church and other Christian organizations or movements. We have the correct translation of the Greek in the Revised Version, "And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ." Not three things which are to characterize the leaders of the Church; but one thing. The leaders are to build up the Church by training its members to do Christian service. Note the words, "For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministering." One need not argue that no Christian is "perfected in service" until that service includes this feature which Christ puts at the very first place. But it is a tragic fact that the vast majority of our churches have no place at all in their program for the training of willing members to be intelligently prepared to win others to Christ. This

is also true of the majority of Young Men's Christian Associations, of special conferences for the study of almost every other phase of Christian service, and similar movements. Literally dozens of Christians have said to the writer: "I often felt that I would like to try to do this work; but I do not know how, and have never had an opportunity to be instructed on the subject."

Back of this failure on the part of pastors has been the absence of any adequate training of prospective ministers in the theological seminaries, so that they would know how to organize and develop this feature of their work. It is beyond question the most important feature of Christian duty on the side of definite service in building up the Church, whether directly in its communion, or through those institutions which represent the Church in special phases of its work. Yet it has been most commonly neglected. But if the challenge of the times shall be met by the Christian leaders of our day, they must rise to this task with final determination to be faithful henceforth, however neglectful they have been in the past. Just here will be the difficult point of uncertainty for many. It is not easy for men who have not done this thing for years to reconstruct their program, even though they know it should be done. The inertia of neglect is hard to overcome. In fact it will not be unless, in importunate prayer, God's grace is sought for the task. But it must be done, unless the followers of Christ are to go on in the same old inefficient way.

A large number of instances could be cited of pastors, and a limited number of secretaries, who had evaded this task, but became quickened with the conviction of their duty, and determined to undertake it. They had feared that they could not enlist the cooperation of their people. They had feared that their people would not undertake this form of service. But they made a beginning and were agreeably surprised to find a goodly number ready at least to study the subject, with a view to intelligent preparation. Report after report has been sent to the writer of the blessings that followed this endeavor. All such were immediately more usable in God's hand, and he always used them to his glory and to the blessing of men. Then fearful hesitation gave place to a new confidence in the success which followed the effort to obey the plain will of God, a new confidence in the people and their

willingness to serve, and a new joy in the earnest of larger results for the Master's cause in the world. Let every one of us allow the truth to burn down deep into our consciences. When we know the loving will of our Heavenly Father, *there is no possible excuse for not being willing to try to obey him.*

*PRAYER: Give me grace, O Father, to be faithful to this trust, where I have been so long unfaithful. Give me faith in Thee and in the people, as I attempt to enlist them in this service, and to train them for efficiency.*

#### **Fourth Day: A Training Class in Every Church and Association**

The first necessary step in securing witnessing Christians in church or Association is to develop an atmosphere wherein the idea shall be constantly pervasive that God desires nothing so much on the side of our daily service as to have us recognize the constant duty and privilege of winning others to Christ and the Church. The writer to the Hebrews urged them to "obey them that have the rule over you . . . for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account" (Heb. 13: 17). Nothing could be more wholesome in the atmosphere of any Christian institution than the knowledge that the leaders there are constantly concerned about the eternal welfare of every life that feels the uplift of such a presence. Such an atmosphere cannot be developed in a day or in a month. But it may be cultivated far more rapidly than some would suspect who never tried it or felt it. God will honor all seed planting to that end. The idea should be prominent in sermon, in conversation, and in all services, for several weeks. In pastoral calling, the case of a neighbor will give natural opportunity for a talk on the subject.

The most successful method of developing this atmosphere is by taking a series of Studies, such as is contained in this book, through a succession of weekly meetings, in church or Association. Where could one find a more practical list of subjects for meditation and prayer? Everyone who is willing to do so should possess a copy of the book, not simply to have during the weeks when it is used in

the company studying it; but afterwards to take up as a handbook when occasion may arise in dealing with particular individuals, whose problems are discussed in the Studies. No earnest Christian could devote even a short time to a daily study of the subject without being greatly blessed thereby. These Studies lend themselves admirably to a weekly meeting. Parts of the lessons for each of the six days may be assigned to different persons for mention or discussion, or the leader can take the Study for the week himself. Previous study by the members will add greatly to the interest of the meeting.

In planning for this course, make the invitation as broad as possible. If used in a series of mid-week meetings in a church, every member of the congregation who is willing to study the subject should be urged to attend. In an Association a similar general invitation should be pressed upon all who are willing to make a beginning. Make it plain that attendance does not pledge one to do personal work; but that it is hoped that the study of the subject will lead to increasing sympathy with the thought of the need of it and the growing desire to undertake it. Often it has proved true that a most unlikely person in the minds of the leaders has become the conspicuous success in the work. Frequently it was docility of spirit which led to the desire and purpose to obey.

In a city in Ohio such a class was started by a pastor, who had never tried it before. One man in the church, who had had no sense of responsibility for souls beyond his Sunday school class, began to attend out of a spirit of loyalty to his pastor. Soon he became interested and concerned. He was a humble man, whom no one would have selected as the greatest winner of souls in that community. Yet within a few months his zeal became a matter of public note. God gave him access to the hearts of prominent men as well as to those of humbler friends. The Young Men's Christian Association asked him to be the leader of two groups, young men and boys. That Association had the most remarkable personal work in its history. When Samuel was sent to anoint one of Jesse's sons to be king, everyone would have thought David the least likely one of the whole number; but he was the man that God wanted. It is often so today. God passed all the ministers in Wales and touched Evan Roberts, the son of a coal miner, to



be the leader of that mighty revival of 1904-5. So let every one who is willing to come be urged to begin the study.

PRAYER: *When Thou wouldst mobilize Thy followers, O Master, let me not evade the draft; but help me to be eager to enlist for any service of adequate preparation that will enable me to be a good soldier of Thine.*

### **Fifth Day: Organizing Workers in Church and Association**

In connection with the general meeting for the study of the subject, there should be an organization in every local church or Association, consisting of one or more groups of workers. The best time for meetings should be carefully determined. Usually in churches the regular mid-week service has been the time for the general study of the book, and in nearly all such cases, the workers have preferred to have the special group meetings following the regular service, giving an additional hour at that time, rather than a separate evening. In Associations, as a rule, the best time for the groups to meet will be immediately after the class study. It will generally prove profitable for all of the workers to meet together for a few minutes, under the leadership of one who can bring some thought for the whole number, especially some request for fellowship in prayer.

The larger company should be divided into smaller groups—averaging not more than six people. When members of a group win others, these new members should be added to the groups, thus beginning at once to win others. When by this method a group grows to the number of twelve, divide it into two of six. A small group works better, for it can develop intimate relations and sacred confidences, as the members counsel and pray together. Each group should choose a leader who will count it his privilege and responsibility to maintain among his fellows a strong sense of fidelity to the work. After the introductory gathering for a few moments, the several groups should meet separately for the remainder of the hour.

Each group should form itself into a prayer band. Paul's statement to the Corinthians (II Cor. 1: 11), "Ye also helping together by prayer," should be kept in mind. From the very start let it be

realized, with utmost sympathy, and faith in God, that the entire work depends on him, and that "we are laborers together with God" (I Cor. 3: 9). Each worker should have a little book in which should be entered the name of every worker in all the groups, however large the number. A precious bond of faithful intercession should be developed, under a covenant of daily prayer. It will come to mean much for every individual worker to know that a company of friends is lifting him up to God as he attempts to speak for Christ.

A few years ago a young lady went from a company of workers whose members had pledged this ministry of intercession to each other. She had been trying in vain to win a friend to Christ. Now somehow she felt a new sense of reenforcement. Her friend had been like a stone wall of resistance. The workers met on Tuesday evening. On Thursday she called on the young lady, hardly expecting a change of attitude, yet with a new hope. To her amazement all opposition had melted away. The young lady herself said she could not understand the change that had come over her; but that she had come to a sense of her need of Christ, whom she now gladly accepted as her Saviour and Lord. The heart of the soul winner was overflowing with gratitude for the power of intercessory prayer, in answer to which God had touched the hesitant soul.

*PRAYER: Help us to realize the importance of loyal team work, our Father, and to remember constantly that we may count on Thee, when we meet the conditions of acceptable prayer.*

### **Sixth Day: Making It Definite**

Each member of the company should use the little book in which the prayer covenant names are recorded for another purpose also. He should keep the names of his special group in a separate place from the general list, and with these he should write the names of all those for whose salvation his group are praying and striving. The group should live in the atmosphere of Paul's words to the Colossians (1: 3-6), loyally encouraging each other in prayer and unto fruitfulness. At the first meeting each member of the group should be ready to name at least one person for whose salvation he is concerned. Each member of the group should place all of these

names in the little book. This is making it definite. Moreover, each member should begin to cultivate a special concern for the person whom he has named to the group. We should pray that God will keep this burden heavy on our hearts. It slips off so easily.

In a later Study we will consider how to approach people. But first we are to emphasize the equipment we need for the work and the vital necessity of taking God into account. Meantime it is wise to develop from the beginning the group consciousness, especially the beginnings of the ministry of intercession for those whose names are on the little books. It helps very greatly to become personally interested in these Studies which immediately follow if we are already mentioning by name at least one person to God daily in whose salvation we are concerned, and about whom we already have the hope that God will use us to win him or her to Christ. Hence the value of organizing the groups early in the program of meetings. In the confidence of the group, the persons named should be discussed. One will be able to throw some light on this or that person's condition, helping those to be wise who are planning to approach the person. Sometimes, when one has not been successful in his effort, it may be deemed wise by the group for a second member to make the effort, and later on a third effort might be made by still another. The fact that several are interested has often made an impression on one who has been approached.

One of the most important rules for each group is that which requires each member to make a report of progress each week. Hold to this rule most strictly. Knowing that this report must be made each week is a constant incentive to each member to have something to report and to have at least one conversation with the person about whom he must report. When one member is discouraged, let every effort be made to stimulate him to patient perseverance. This is a topic to be frequently emphasized at the short introductory meeting for all workers. It will be helpful to bring this book to the meetings of the group and recall this or that item that may quicken to renewed perseverance.

Another vital condition to success is faithful attendance. Make a definite standing engagement, which nothing shall break, unless absolutely necessary. Put first things first in your plans for the

week. You will often feel that you have not the time to go. Measure your responsibility for the success of the group before God. Your attendance at that very meeting may lead to the salvation of an immortal soul. The habit will grow. There is no discharge in this war. (Eccl. 8: 8.) When you have the joy of reporting a soul saved by God's grace, you will want every member to be there. So they will want to see you when their report is brought. For it is certain that God will thus work, and such joyful reports will be made from time to time.

PRAYER: *Thou hast taught us, O Lord, our Shepherd, that Thou dost call Thy sheep by name. Help us also to take Thy burden of individual souls upon our own hearts day by day.*

### Seventh Day: Suggestions for the Class

Human nature is a constant quality through the years. It does not surprise us that men hesitate to obey the commandments of God, for we know our own hearts so well. Yet we constantly see in Scripture records and in daily life how unwise such hesitation is. Whenever anyone obeys, God never fails to give a blessing to him or her.

1. How did Moses hesitate to obey God, and why? What was God's attitude toward Moses, and what is it toward us, when we hesitate? What is the lesson for us in David's hesitation? How may we profit by the hesitation of Isaiah? Describe Jonah's refusal to obey. Have we been shirking this duty of seeking to win others? What shall we do henceforth?

2. How is proficiency attained in anything? What has been true of hesitant Christians when they once begin to study the subject? Describe Christ's influence upon Andrew and John when they abode with him.

3. Who is mainly responsible for the failure of the Church to be a witnessing Church? What is the teaching of Eph. 4: 11, 12? What must be done if we shall meet the challenge of the times? What has been the experience when pastors have taken up this work?

4. State the necessity of developing an atmosphere in every church in which this idea is pervasive. State the plan for a regular

series of studies in church or Association. Who should be encouraged to attend these meetings? Tell the story of the Ohio man who caught his inspiration at such a series of meetings and became such a fruitful winner of people to Christ.

5. Describe the organization of the workers in a local church, or Association. How many should be in a separate group? Why? What is said about each group being a prayer band? What should be the place of prayer in this work? Tell of the young lady who was encouraged by this covenant of intercession to make another effort to win a friend to Christ.

6. How should each member of the group make the work definite? What advantages grow out of confidential discussion in the group regarding individuals listed? How many should call on a person whom they are striving to win to Christ? What is said about the weekly report? How should the group deal with a discouraged member? State the importance of making attendance a matter of absolute fidelity.

*Prayer: Help me to realize, O Christ, that concern for others is at the very heart of the Christian life.*



## STUDY V

### SPECIAL PLANS FOR BIBLE CLASSES

#### First Day: Special Opportunities in Bible Schools

From the beginning of the history of God's training a people to know him, we have the command to teach the children, as in Deut. 4: 9, 10, where the people of Israel are told to "teach them unto thy children and thy children's children. . . . That they may learn to fear me all the days that they live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children." So in Josh. 4: 6, 7, the memorial stones are to be set up so that when their children ask as to their meaning, they shall be taught the history of the nation's redemption from Egypt. The modern Bible school is generally considered to be primarily for religious education. Yet such education is a means to an end, and that end is training in the knowledge of God and his Kingdom, so that all who are taught and trained shall enter upon this supreme service of the extension of that Kingdom. Hence the Bible school is the Church's first organization at hand for purposes of propaganda.

Manifestly one reason why so many people have never done anything to try to win others to Christ is that they were never taught to do so when they were young. Had they been given the conception from the start of the Christian life involving this service, and trained to perform it, what a different story would be written today! It has been done in Korea, where every one understands that being a Christian means being a winner of others to Christ. No section of the globe has seen such growth in the numbers of additions to the Church in twenty-five years as Korea has witnessed. Long ago this should have been done in our Bible schools. Nor is it too late to begin this definite training. Nothing would more surely tend to develop a witnessing church. Those who plan our lessons could easily work out a course which would include the particular commands showing the will of God, the instances of our Lord and the apostles and disciples winning others, and the evidence

that throughout the New Testament this is the outstanding objective in the work of spreading the Kingdom.

When the writer was a Bible class teacher in his college days in the city of Cincinnati, the first boy in the class who became a Christian was about thirteen years old. His parents never attended church services; an older brother was indifferent, though a younger sister attended the Sunday school. We made a prayer covenant, which he himself specified, to pray and strive to win every member of his family to Christ and the Church. On calling at his home, we found that he was earnestly pleading with his mother to attend the services, which she soon did. The older brother became regular at the Sunday school, in answer to his mother's desire. In time, the father began to attend occasionally. In a few months the mother and younger sister united with the Church. Later the older brother came. Just one year from the time when the boy united with the Church the father came, and the entire family of five occupied one pew together on that glad day. But the boy did not cease his efforts to win others. That was just a beginning.

*PRAYER: Help all who enlist under the banner of Thy cross, O Christ, to become at once recruiting agents to bring others to the same enlistment.*

## **Second Day: Adult Bible Classes**

It is significant that one of God's first mobilizing orders for the people of Israel was a command that three times in the year all the men should "appear before the Lord Jehovah, the God of Israel" (Exodus 34: 23). Even in our time, when all sorts of conventions and conferences gather the men together, it would be considered rather strenuous to gather three times in a year. Yet most enterprising business firms recognize it as vitally necessary to the best development of business and the element of loyal efficiency among their men to have them gather at least once a year to consider the matters that will advance the cause to which they have given themselves. Who can question that if the men of Israel had obeyed this commandment, there would have been a different story to tell of that people's history? But the men yielded to the spirit of neglect. It was not convenient to go so often, and it was

expensive. Again the voice of God has been calling the men to gather together in his service.

It is a startling fact that seventy-five per cent of the young men of America are not accustomed to attend any church service. Yet at one time many of these were in the Sunday school. One day they imagined that they were getting too old to continue in this "school for children." The main reason for this idea was that their fathers had ceased when they were young men to gather together to study the Word of God. Had their fathers continued this practice, their boys would never have had the idea that they were too old to come. The proof is in the fact that today where great classes of men are active, the boys are all looking forward to the time when they will be old enough to become members of the men's classes. A larger program has been developed in recent years resulting in the formation and growth of adult classes for men and women. Many churches have been revolutionized by these classes. Moreover they have become recruiting ground for the Church. Wherever these classes flourish, the one outstanding fact about them is that every newcomer is met with outstretched hands on the part of leaders and members. Inevitably this atmosphere of welcome has spread into the church services, with blessed results.

The men discover the man power of their church which they had not realized. Many classes have committees for work on various lines. Some have a Committee on Good Citizenship, making itself felt in more than one campaign, curtailing corruption and putting good men into office. Some have a Committee on Employment, which has a list of men seeking employment and also a list of business and manufacturing houses which apply to this committee when they want good men. In many homes, where a carpenter or other workman is wanted, an application to this committee has secured an opening for a member of the class for a few days. In some churches former Brotherhoods have been merged into the Bible class, which has become the biggest men's movement in the church. A Social Committee has had much to do on the side of gatherings for getting better acquainted and making new members fully identified with the life of the church.

Some day the men and women of our churches will awake to the fact that they cannot afford to drift on without being identified

with this adult Bible class movement. A little planning will readily make it possible. In many cities the most prominent business and professional men are in these classes. In one state the governor is the teacher of a class of three hundred men, who not only gather once a week to study the Word of God, but apply the teachings in Christian service and citizenship. Many of these men had not attended Sunday school for thirty years, but are now as regular as they are at business during the week. They know their attendance is a direct contribution to a wholesome influence upon the younger men of the city. They also know they owe it to Christ and his Church to put the same untiring enterprise into the business of his Kingdom that they put into their money-making projects. They confess they have been slackers in this respect, avoiding the draft. But now they have enlisted, having heard the command in I Cor. 16: 13, "Stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."

*PRAYER: As Thou didst command the men of old to gather before Thee, give the men of today to hear that same command, and to realize how great the blessings are which will result when they obey.*

### Third Day: Recruiting New Members

The entire Bible school should be the organization which functions actively in recruiting new members for its own classes, and, as an immediate consequence, new members for the church and congregation. It goes without argument that the adult classes should lead in this work. Bible classes in Young Men's Christian Associations should have as a definite objective the securing all of their members for membership in some church. It was God's plan for all believers from the beginning (Acts. 2: 41, 47).

One familiar method, frequently adopted, is worthy of cultivation. Slips are distributed to every member of every class, whose teachers are requested to secure information from each member as to those in the homes who are not accustomed to attend the services of the school or church. This will furnish a goodly list of prospects which should be followed up energetically. In securing the names the approximate age should be ascertained. Where there are very

young children, women should call on the mothers. The boys and girls should invite their fellows, as should the young people. Adults should invite the parents and others.

Many adult Bible classes divide their number into two divisions under captains. These divisions are grouped into teams, each under a lieutenant, who not only organizes the team for invitation work, but checks up his team in the matter of attendance. These teams are always striving for the best record, both in perfect attendance and in obtaining new members. New names are also secured in some cities from polling lists, and dozens of men have gone, by twos, making a house-to-house canvass for members, with surprising results.

At intervals there should be a contest including the entire school, in which it should be divided into two parts. In succeeding contests this division may be made on different lines, securing variety of interests. A great campaign of invitation should be undertaken, within a given time, each side seeking to bring in the largest number. Weekly reports should be announced and posted, and every possible stimulus given to the contest. At this time every member of the church and congregation should become identified with the campaign, working with the adult classes, and especially helping to secure names of non-attendants. Enterprising leaders should lead the divisions.

Experience has proved that new members are generally able to give names of their friends, who like themselves have not been accustomed to attend the services. These new members should be immediately drawn into active participation in the campaign of invitation. New and older members should call together. Experience has also taught us to persist in this work of invitation. The caller is not to consider one attempt sufficient, but is to expect to continue the invitation week after week, in a kindly spirit, but also a persistent one. Instances could be reported of people who finally came just because the earnestness of persistent appeals convinced them of the sincerity and reality of the life of their Christian friends. This is what our Lord had in mind in Luke 14: 23, when he commanded his disciples to go out and "compel them to come in." It is the compelling constraint of a love that hopes all things and works on.



PRAYER: *Help me to learn how to say "Come" to others, my Father, and not to be weary in well doing, but to recognize this as part of my constant task.*

#### **Fourth Day: Problems of Adolescence**

The Bible is the only sacred scripture which has a distinctive place for the child. This fact alone betrays a fatal lack in the sacred writings of all other religions. There is evident purpose in giving us the record of the child Samuel (I Sam. 2: 26, and 3: 1-10). It is clearly intended to emphasize the fact that a little child often reveals a capacity for religious training too often unsuspected. God's thought of Samuel is a picture of God's thought for every child. When our Lord "set a child in the midst" of the people (Matt. 18: 2), he challenged new attention to the importance of solving the problems of the race. For when we solve the problem of the child, all other problems find solution.

The question is frequently asked, When is a boy or girl old enough to make an intelligent confession of faith in Christ and come into the communion of the Church? There is a very important set of facts which throw light upon this inquiry. There is a law of the land, which is the result of widespread investigation into the maturity of the child mind, its capacity to appreciate moral responsibility and its amenability to law. According to this law a child under seven years of age cannot commit a crime. Moral responsibility is not adequately developed before that age. Between the ages of seven and fourteen the law recognizes exceptional cases, very few from seven to ten, many more from eleven to fourteen. Many boys and girls from ten to fourteen are in our reformatories. Ordinarily most girls and boys at twelve are intelligently ready to appreciate the moral quality of their conduct, their desires, and their choices. It was at twelve years of age that Jesus went up to the temple (Luke 2: 42), according to the custom of Jewish boys. It was their way then of uniting with the church.

The law declares that at the age of fourteen boys and girls are fully morally responsible. Hence at that age orphans are allowed to choose a guardian for life. At this age most boys and girls are in high school. Therefore it must be said with all earnestness that when a boy or girl has reached the age of fourteen, having been

nurtured in the atmosphere of Christian home or church, and has not felt ready gladly to confess Christ, some one has not been faithful to that child. For it is possible so to teach the truth about our need, as it is suggested in the first Study of this book, as to lead all young people to realize their hopelessness out of Christ, and so to quicken their responsive love and gratitude to the Lord Jesus for all that he has done for us as to lead them to the desire and purpose to enlist under his banner for life.

The four great crisis years in the lives of young people are from twelve to sixteen. It is most significant that during those four years there are more first apprehensions of delinquent boys and girls than in any other four years. It is equally important to note that during these same four years more boys and girls confess their faith in Christ and unite with the Church than in any other four years. It is impossible to contemplate these facts without being stirred with a profound sense of the Church's responsibility for the rising generation before they reach those crisis years, and especially during that critical time of life decisions. All the facts that served to stimulate many of our boys to enlist in the recent war may be used with telling effect in urging young people to enlist under the banner of the Lord Jesus.

*PRAYER: Give me the spirit of a little child, Our Father, and help me to be specially concerned for the children, realizing how much better it is to secure a whole life for Christ, than to give him the fag end toward the last.*

### **Fifth Day: A Program for Quiet, Intensive Work**

Call a meeting of all teachers of classes twelve years old and over, in church or Association. Emphasize their responsibility for those in their classes who are not yet confessing Christians. Then present and adopt the following plan. Have each teacher invite to his home every member of the class who is a member of the Church. Explain that the plan has been adopted for all classes in the grades mentioned to have every teacher and professing Christian in each class form a prayer-covenant to pray daily for all members of each class who have not confessed Christ, and to strive to win them to Christ and the Church. Form such a

covenant with those present, beginning the prayer there together, and agreeing to accept opportunities that may open to speak for Christ as his witnesses. The covenant is specially to be remembered during the time of the meeting of the class.

Should there be a class without a professing Christian, let the teacher invite a boy or girl who is a member of the Church, and who would be influential with that particular class, to meet with the teacher at a given time. Invite the boy or girl who seems to be most likely to consider favorably the idea of confessing Christ with a view to seeking to win the others. Tell that one member the plan, and have the visiting boy or girl confirm it with an appeal to decide for Christ, emphasizing the worthy motive of being then able to make a covenant with the teacher, in accord with the whole school; and in the hope of bringing the others. Have special prayer with this one and press the matter to the point of securing a decision. If this should not succeed the first time, have some other boy or girl meet with the teacher and that one member again. Thus the increasing influence of a second professing Christian will be helpful to bring the decision. Pray and strive for that one member until the decision is made and the prayer-covenant formed. As rapidly as a member of the class decides for Christ, draw him or her into the covenant, gaining momentum in seeking all of the remainder.

Two by-products have been realized from this plan in schools that have adopted it. First, an entirely new spirit in the class during the half hour of Bible study. Formerly all the girls discussed new hats on the side more or less, and the boys talked about the current games. But now each Christian was in a spirit of prayer and eagerly hoping that some one would make a decision that day. There was better preparation and more prayer, resulting in a company of earnest, intelligent Bible students. The second gain was in better attendance.

The adult Bible classes should adopt the same plan in their teams. They should have the church members in each team meet with the lieutenant and form the prayer-covenant for the others. These groups will do well to maintain their identity in the grouping of workers in connection with the weekly meeting mentioned in the last Study. Every member of every prayer band, in school and

church, should attend faithfully this midweek service where the whole subject is being studied, thus strengthening their purpose and quickening their enthusiasm in the work. This program has proved to be the most practical, workable, fruitful plan the writer has ever known.

PRAYER: *Lord, help me to become a faithful intercessor, that I may come into fullest sympathy with Thee, who art "ever living to make intercession for us."*

### **Sixth Day: Training Young People to Be Soul Winners**

There is a method of teaching which developes young people, as well as older ones, along the line of intelligent preparation for personal work. It is the question method, which ever has in mind the furnishing of the member of the class with an equipment that will enable him to discuss intelligently the whole subject of a decision for Christ and why it should be made. Let us take, for example, the first Study at the beginning of this book. Let the teacher ask some such question as: "John, suppose one of the boys at school tomorrow should ask you if you are a Christian—what would you say?" John would probably answer, "Yes," for he is a member of the Church. Then the teacher might ask, "Suppose he should ask you what it means to believe in Christ as your Saviour—what would you tell him?" There might be some hesitation at this point, and the teacher would then help with the illustrations contained in the first Study. In this conversation, the question method would be continued always. For example, some one in the class should be asked what he would think if he were to find a child on the street who had lost its way, and so on.

The point must always be kept in mind that John is preparing to talk to his friend at school in a conversation on the subject. All the answers are such as he can use in a conversation of this character. In the course of a few weeks the members of the class will be familiar with the simple but adequate teachings that explain why Christ becomes our Saviour because he is Guide to the lost, Physician to the sin-sick, and Redeemer for the slaves to sin. Take another illustration. Ask the class to turn the word "forgive" around and tell what they have. The answer will be—*give for*.

Just so; and all forgiving involves *giving for* in some form. Every time one forgives, he gives up something for the sake of the reconciliation. Often one gives up his own rights. This is the fact which is at the heart of the atonement, which is always made when one forgives another who deserves punishment. Thus God gives Christ for us, as he forgives our sins, for he is in Christ reconciling us to himself through Christ's life and death.

Again, ask the question, "Would it be right for a governor to forgive a man in the penitentiary, if the man gave no sign of being sorry for his crime?" Instant replies of "No." Why not? Thus the class is led to realize that God is not justified in forgiving us unless we repent sincerely, which means forsaking the sin. Moreover only faith can accept a guide by following him, or accept a physician by trusting and obeying him. Thus all essential points may be covered.

The psychology of this procedure is evident. When boys and girls know how to meet the questions about being intelligent Christians, they are far more ready to talk about the subject than when they were ignorant and had never been urged to accept opportunities to do so. It is as true of older people. The class might well study the material in Studies X and XI, presenting common excuses that people give for not accepting or confessing Christ. In simple language this material may be presented. The results of such training are certain and manifold. The young people understand the whole plan of salvation far better because they have studied it with the idea of telling it to others. They develop a sense of personal fellowship with Christ blessed in its fruitage. They become willing witnesses for him as opportunity offers, as they realize as never before the world's need of Christ, whose ambassadors they are.

*PRAYER: O Father, give us the eager desire to help Thy children to know Thee in Jesus Christ, so that they may realize that this is life eternal and seek to help others to know Thee.*

### **Seventh Day: Suggestions for the Class**

Since the main business of the Christian on the side of service is to win others to Christ, it is quite apparent that the early training



of boys and girls to understand this service, with a view to beginning to win others, as soon as they have accepted Christ for themselves, will result in a development of their personal Christian experience that will be precious, and in winning thousands who otherwise might not be reached.

1. What is said of the Bible school as an available organization for the extension of the cause of Christ? What should be done in Bible schools to prepare the scholars to become interested in winning others to Christ? What is the history of Christianity in Korea? Tell the story of the boy in Cincinnati who was used to bring his whole family into the Church.

2. Give a reason why so many young men who were once in Sunday school are now entirely outside of the Church. Describe the modern adult Bible class movement, and what it is doing in many churches. What has proved to be the distinctive feature of the success of such classes? Why should all men and women be identified with these classes?

3. Describe the method of securing new members for schools and churches by distributing slips among the classes and following up the names thus secured. Describe the method of dividing adult classes for team work in securing new members. What is said about these new members being generally able to report others who have not been attendants at the church services?

4. What is said about the Bible in its recognition of the child? What is the statement touching the age when boys and girls may intelligently confess Christ? What is said about the four crisis years in the lives of young people?

5. What is the program for a quiet, intensive work in Bible classes either in churches or Associations? How may adult classes adopt this program? What by-products have been secured?

6. What method should be adopted in teaching young people to understand the plan of salvation? How should they be trained with a view to talking to their friends about confessing Christ? What will be their attitude, after such training, toward doing this?

PRAYER: *Grant me, O Lord, a clear appreciation of the necessity of definite organization in Thy service, so that I shall plan the work and work the plan with faithful zeal.*

## STUDY VI

### PERSONAL RECRUITING EQUIPMENT

#### First Day: The Spirit of Obedience

A good soldier obeys orders. The title of this book is suggested by the experiences through which we have just passed in mobilizing men for the recent war. We are told we need "a moral equivalent for war," which is only another way of saying that we need some high incentives that will inspire us to be strong in the fight against sin in our own lives, and faithful in accepting opportunities to enlist in the great cause of Jesus Christ in the world. We all have great need of the qualities of a good soldier. Those qualities may be said to be concentrated in the spirit of obedience. In I Sam. 12: 14, 15, we find a most important statement regarding man's relation to God, involving the place of this spirit of obedience: "If ye will fear the Lord, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall ye . . . continue following the Lord your God; but if ye will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall the hand of the Lord be against you." History has proved it true, and never more so than in our day before our eyes.

It was the spirit of obedience which explained all that was done by our splendid American soldiers, and by all faithful soldiers, regardless of privations in absence from home, regardless of the unspeakable filth of the trenches, regardless of weary forced marches or inconvenience in travel, regardless of the fact that at any moment in the midst of battle they might be called upon to lay down their lives for the cause. And this spirit of obedience was more than the determination to obey orders, whatever those orders might be. It was also the spirit of loyalty to a great cause, even the cause of justice for little nations as well as big ones, the spirit of readiness to sacrifice their lives, if need be, for the sake of the liberty of all people who had not yet the chance for self-govern-

ment. The ideals which were set before them were a mighty inspiration to splendid fidelity. Moreover, this willing obedience was further inspired by their confidence in their leaders. We realize also that if obedience had given way to mutiny or rebellion, defeat instead of victory would have followed, and far greater loss than was sustained because of their fidelity. It always costs much to be faithful; but it always costs far more not to be.

Is not the lesson plain beyond any possible argument? God's Word still stands. There is no greater need in the Church of Jesus Christ than that every individual who enlists under the banner of his cross shall realize that this same spirit of obedience, of loyalty to the cause, at whatever personal inconvenience, at whatever cost of life and gold, is absolutely necessary to the triumph of Christ's cause in the world. Who can question that the spirit of personal willfulness in the face of Christ's manifest will for his followers, compromising with Christian duty on the levels of fleshly desires and worldly ambitions, explains the failure and defeat of Christ's Church today? It is nothing else that explains the Church's pitiful inefficiency, after nineteen centuries of so-called Christian service. Let us have just one generation of consecrated Christians, who enter the service of Christ as our soldiers entered the service of the countries allied in this war, fired with the spirit of Paul, saying, "This one thing I do" (Phil. 3: 13), and that one generation would see the Gospel carried to every spot on the planet.

*PRAYER: Forgive me, O Christ, who didst go to Thy cross in Thy fidelity, for my miserable self-satisfied and self-centered life, professing to be Thine and yet refusing to be obedient to Thee as soon as it becomes inconvenient, or costs more than my selfish comfort is willing to surrender. Quicken in me by Thy divine grace the spirit of true loyalty to Thee and Thy cause.*

## Second Day: Cultivating Christ's Love for the Lost

In former Studies it has been intimated that nothing will so surely empty us of self, and stimulate us to fidelity as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, as the sense of his constraining love. But a general statement is never gripping. We must have more detail. This is given us by the apostle Paul in I Cor. 13. Study this

remarkable chapter and note how this divine love actually proves its presence, its power, and its blessing. At the heart of that wonderful description of Christ-like love we have this most significant fact, v. 5, "Love seeketh not her own." Unselfishness is the deepest reality in the love of Christ. And this will find expression in unhesitating sympathy for one whom we are seeking to help. Unselfishness of this sort is rare. Many propose to accept Christ's salvation; but not to share the fellowship of his sufferings (Phil. 3: 10).

Another element in this Christ-like love largely explains the spirit of unselfishness. It is the spirit of humility: "Love vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up" (v. 4). Could we but realize what pitiful failures we are as efficient and fruitful Christians, in the face of Christ's command to make disciples of every creature, it would surely put us into the dust. Humility leads to sympathy with our fellowmen, however fallen and seemingly hopeless their case may be. Moreover "love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things" (v. 7). The truth that invests every fallen man with dignity and importance is the fact that he can be transformed by the grace of God (II Cor. 3: 16-18). Moreover, this spirit of humility remembers that one does not know it all, and reveals a modesty of assurance, while it is certain of the sufficient grace of God availing for every kind and time of need.

The whole chapter breathes a certain enthusiasm in loving men, a quenchless ardor for needy souls, which is suggested by that most inspiring statement (v. 8), "Love never faileth." True enthusiasm means *God in a man*. Its common usage often involves a misnomer. We see it largely manifest in Paul. He could write this chapter, as many another could not have done. Paul was in "dead earnest," that is, he was living for just one thing, and was dead to all else. The lethargy of spiritual laziness is the shame of the Church today. The lack of enthusiasm cuts the nerve of service in thousands of lives. Its presence explains the marvelous exploits of the heroes of the faith, both those known to fame and those known only to the eye of God.

Again, this spirit of love involves patience and perseverance (vv. 4, 7, 8). Very often we shall find one whom we seek to win to Christ to be nothing less than exasperating. But to show impa-

tience with such a one is to admit defeat. Let us remember those words about our Lord in Matt. 26: 63, "But Jesus held his peace." Suppose he had not! There is a poise of Christian love that has learned to "wait patiently" in the midst of trying conditions, however discouraging they may be. Then the power to love is never so glorious as when it will not let go. We read (John 13: 1) that Jesus, "having loved his own, loved them to the end." Tennyson caught the meaning of it when he cried: "Strong Son of God, immortal love." Hear Paul also in Acts 20: 24: "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy."

*PRAYER: Burn out all of self, O Christ, and fill me with Thy love until every other undeserving man shall be to me as much the object of Thy grace as I have been, so that I shall be gentle, sympathetic, buoyant, hopeful, and unfailing in my efforts to win others to Thee.*

### Third Day: Faith in God's Power to Save

The tap root of all sin is unbelief. Therefore all failure must be largely explained by a lack of faith in God. This does not mean simply a failure to look to God for help in personal service. The trouble lies deeper. If we thoroughly believed God's Word about the deadly fatality of sin, we would feel very differently about the lost, and could not continue in our indifference. Many would not deny the teachings of the Word of God; but they do not really believe that their friends who are out of Christ are hopelessly lost. Hence they are slow to believe God's Word regarding the necessity of having the Holy Spirit regenerate their lives in order to attain their salvation. They pass lightly over such statements of Christ as are found in Matt. 25: 46, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." They even begin to wonder if Christ really said it, or meant it. They fail to realize that the background of John 3: 16 is that men are perishing out of Christ, and that God so loved the world that he gave Christ, that "whosoever believeth in him *should not perish*, but have everlasting life." These are also in danger of being satisfied with the idea that people believe in Christ if they



have made a nominal profession, though their lives betray a lack of reality in their faith.

It is also just as essential to believe that Jesus Christ saves "them to the uttermost that come unto God by him" (Heb. 7: 26). One must first appreciate his own helplessness in sin before he can have a genuine burden for those whom he believes to be going the way of eternal death, or before he can realize in a vital way the power of God's redeeming grace, revealed in Christ's life and death. Too many church members have had no vital experience of salvation by Jesus Christ. Recently a young lady in the city of Chicago was asked if she were a member of a church. Replying in the affirmative, she was then asked whether she found Jesus Christ a daily blessing in her life. Surprised, she said: "Why, no, I don't know much about Christ." Her friend was then surprised, and asked: "But did you not say you are a member of the Church?" Her reply was not less startling than significant: "Why, yes, our minister asked me to join the Church; but he said nothing to me about Christ." Such a church member could never be a winner of others to Christ, until she first had known him as her own Saviour and Lord. She knew nothing of God's power to save.

The history of the religious experience of the race is beyond question to any thoroughly candid student of mankind. Faith in the redeeming work of God in Jesus Christ is the absolutely essential condition of the task and privilege of witnessing to others regarding God's power to save from the slavery of ignorance and sin. In our next Study we are to consider the place of God as the divine factor in the whole work of redemption. Here we are specifying the need of a living faith in his power to save the lost before we can be usable in his hand in helping those who need him to find and accept his salvation. The only sufficient and efficient provision of salvation for penitent and believing men is God's provision in Jesus Christ. As we are taught in Acts 4: 12, "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

Some years ago in Japan the writer met a major in the Japanese army who had become a Christian. He testified that he had long dismissed the thought of Buddhism, as unworthy of his respect, and for some time he had been reading the teachings of Confucius, as

being the best ethics of which he knew. But he confessed that during this time he loved the life of sin and lived it, as if Confucius had never been born. One day he noted the life of a lieutenant in his command who was not joining in the dissipations of the other officers of his mess. The lieutenant said he had become a Christian and that the old life was gone forever. He urged the major to read the Gospel of Jesus. At first he disregarded the suggestion; but later yielded to the repeated appeals of the younger officer. He was quickly fascinated by the noble life and teachings of Jesus. He was amazed to see how he came to hate his old life of sin and to love this life which Christ opened to his earnest soul. Ere long he accepted Christ as his Saviour and enlisted under the banner of his cross. He then ordered a goodly number of the latest Japanese translation of "Pilgrim's Progress" and sent a copy to every officer he knew, saying the book contained his experience and he hoped that they too would find Christ as he had done. His final words were these: "I wish to testify that there is a power in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ which will change the desires of the human heart, if a man will be honest with him." His was a living faith in God's power to save to the uttermost all who would take Christ as he had done.

PRAYER: *"Lord, I believe: help Thou mine unbelief." Help me to "practice the presence of God" in all things, and to accept Thy Word as the only rule of faith and life for me.*

#### Fourth Day: Purity—The Responsibility of Example

Every student of the Bible finds one commandment of God written in a flaming message on all its pages,—*Ye must be clean*, Psalm 51: 6, 7, 10. All of God's dealings with men teach this. If we be unclean, we must be cleansed and kept clean, if we would have the favor of God. Moreover God has provided constant cleansing for us all, as indicated in I John 1: 9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Outward ceremonial cleansings always pointed to the demand for a clean heart. The outward life may be a whited sepulcher, but "God is not mocked" (Gal. 6: 7). The psalmist had discovered the truth, for he wrote (Psalm 66: 18),

"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear." God cannot use anyone who willingly compromises with known sin. We must conquer here, or we shall be conquered. And here again we must enter by faith into Christ's victory for us. Paul warns, in I Cor. 3: 16, 17, against defiling the temple of God, "which temple ye are." Purity involves motive, desire, thought, word, and deed, the whole life and every day of the life.

Not only is a sincere life necessary if we would be usable in God's hand, but it is also necessary if we would have the confidence of men. To be a witness one must have something to say, and say it. But the first question when he takes the witness stand is whether his character is such as to command the respect and confidence of those who know him, otherwise his testimony is vitiated by his unworthy life. There is a subtle, but very real power when a man's word rings true. Nothing gives an appeal to an unbeliever more power than a consistent life back of what one says. Mere intellectual argument, of itself, will not be so effective. They should go together. But the power of example is very real. The Christian must ever be sensitive to this vital truth.

Some years ago a Christian who lived in a village in Illinois heard his next door neighbor use some blasphemous language. He was amazed, for while he knew his neighbor to be an unbeliever, he had no idea of the extent of his infidelity. A great burden for that neighbor's salvation came upon him. He did not sleep complacently, for the burden increased. Knowing his neighbor to be argumentative, he tried to prepare himself to answer the common objections of unbelievers. One day he saw the neighbor at the front gate and hurried over to speak to him. But when he reached the gate, all his prepared speech had left him, and he could only take his neighbor's hand in both of his own, and say: "Oh, my dear friend, I am so concerned about your immortal soul." Overcome by strong emotion, he turned away and walked back home, feeling that his effort had been a failure. The unbeliever was genuinely astonished, but as he watched his Christian friend, he said to himself: "I have known that man for twenty years. He is pure gold. If he knows Christianity to be so real as to lead him to have such concern about me, it must be worth while, and I want to know about it." The sincerity of a godly life convinced the unbeliever

as mere logical argument never could have done. He sought out the Christian neighbor and came himself to be an earnest Christian.

*PRAYER: I pray for earnest sincerity, O God. Help me to know the joy of a daily friendship with Thee, so that when I speak to others they will recognize in me a living epistle, "known and read of all men."*

### **Fifth Day: Prayer—The Secret of Power**

Something has been said about prayer in former Studies, and more will be said. In this Study the emphasis is at the point where we urge that no man can be adequately equipped to win others to Christ who is not cultivating the prayer life, which is much more than asking God for things. In our next Study we shall urge the necessity of depending on God to do what no man can do. At this time we desire to urge that communion with God develops a constant sense of his nearness that revolutionizes the life in which the habit of prayer has not been cultivated. It is evident, in Mark 1: 35, that Christ could not get on without communion with his Father. There we read that, "in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." He practiced his own teaching about praying in secret (Matt. 6: 6), being alone with God. Again we read, in Luke 6: 12, "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." Who of us can dare to think that we can enter into Christ's fellowship with the Father unless we cultivate the prayer life as he did?

Moreover it is quite significant to note that in many instances where Christ manifested the power of God to men, it was as he prayed that such power was exercised. When he fed the multitude he looked up to heaven (Luke 9: 16) for the blessing of God upon the whole transaction. On the Mount of Transfiguration we read (Luke 9: 29): "And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening." At the time of the healing of the boy at the foot of the mountain, he said to the disciples, who could not heal the boy (Matt. 17: 21), "This kind goeth not out but by prayer." This statement justified the inference that he always prayed at every such experience, when

God was using him to reveal the divine love and the divine power. At the grave of Lazarus (John 11: 41, 42) we read that "Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always; but because of the people, I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent me." Yes, the prayer life is the secret of power with God for men, and with men for God.

Spurgeon was once asked by a young student for the secret of his power. The young man asked what work he must do in order to have similar power. Quick as a flash, Spurgeon replied: "Knee-work, young man. Knee-work!" A woman in a western city who had but recently taken Christ as her Saviour was so burdened for her husband's salvation that she could not eat. Her life of constant prayer for her husband reminded one of Paul's statement in Rom. 8: 26, that "the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." The writer called on the husband, hoping to persuade him to accept the Saviour. He impatiently declared that he did not know what to make of his wife. She was so changed, declaring daily that she could never be happy until he became a Christian. When urged to do so, he replied: "No, I do not intend to." We ventured to say: "Mr. McM——, if your wife continues to pray as she is now doing, I think you will." He hesitated a moment, and then replied: "Well, I am not going to do it yet." Down in his heart he knew he could not resist very much longer the compelling power of that woman's Spirit-filled prayer life. Within two weeks he yielded that stubborn will and accepted Christ. A family altar was one of the first evidences that his had become a Christian home.

*PRAYER: O Christ, whose life must needs be constantly nourished by communion with the Father, teach me how to pray and not to faint, so that my intercession for lost men may prevail.*

### **Sixth Day: Knowing the Bible—God's Ensamples**

The Bible is the sword of the Spirit. Men must be trained in the use of the sword, or it will not only be ineffective, but dangerous at times. Hence we must know our Bibles. We read in I Pet. 1: 25, "The word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word



which by the gospel is preached unto you." Every Christian should have a working knowledge of the Bible. In later Studies we shall suggest special passages of Scripture which may be used to answer many common excuses and objections that people give for not accepting or confessing Christ. One may make a special study of such passages and be at once far better equipped to deal with such excuses, even though a general knowledge of the Scriptures should come later.

But back of such technical information, we need nourishment for our spiritual lives which can be secured only by feeding on the Scriptures as bread for our souls. How suggestive are Paul's words to Timothy, (II Tim. 3: 14-17), "But continue (abide) thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of . . . from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." Most of the Bible history is biography. We find inspiration for our own lives by studying the records of those who learned the way of blessing by their obedience, as well as by their mistakes and sins. Paul tells us, in I Cor. 10: 11: "Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come." We are to emulate their fidelity and avoid their unfaithfulness.

The Christians who love their Bibles are the salt of the earth. No one ever became usable of God to a notable degree who neglected his Bible. We find our way becoming plain by learning how God guided and helped others. As well expect to thrive without nourishing food as to grow spiritually without regular help from God's word. Cut off an army from its base of supplies, and there will be no more victories. An unopened Bible in many a home will explain the fact that the atmosphere of that home has deteriorated, although the occupants try to still their accusing consciences and refuse to confess their neglect. A busy lawyer once heard his pastor declare that no man could cultivate the habit of reading his Bible faithfully every morning, even for a few minutes, who would not miss the blessing, if it should be omitted even for one

day. He did not believe it at the time, but was quickened to the point of deciding to try it for awhile. One morning a tardy rising meant either missing the usual train to the city, or missing his Scripture reading. The Bible was discarded. The result was an astonishment. His sense of lack through the day was so real that he determined thereafter to have his quiet hour with God, though it meant taking a later train. The fruit of the habit is precious. This twofold cultivation of the habit of communion with God by prayer and the study of his Word will lead us more and more to desire above every other thing to grow into his will for us. We may well appropriate the following words of Andrew Murray as expressing our own aspirations, "Beloved, let us seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Let our hearts be filled with a deep conviction of what we lack, a desire for what God offers, a willingness to sacrifice everything for it, and we may rest assured that the marvels of Pentecost in Jerusalem and Samaria will again be repeated."

*PRAYER: O Christ, Thou art the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Thou hast translated the written word into the living Word. Help me to do this, so that I may be adequately equipped for Thy service.*

### **Seventh Day: Suggestions for the Class**

An equipment for Christian service cannot be put on by artificial means. It comes only by growth, and requires time for its development. But it may be cultivated successfully, and far more readily than one might suppose, when we give God his full right of way in our lives. No one is justified in supposing that he is never to possess certain gifts because he may lack them. We have a wonderful promise in Phil. 4: 19, "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Consider Mr. Moody's defects as he began to grow into larger and ever larger power. God's grace is equally available for every man who seeks it as he did.

1. Illustrate the necessity of obedience in the Lord's service by the experience of our soldiers in the recent war. What elements entered into this spirit of obedience on the part of our men, which must also find place in the life of every loyal Christian? What

has been the history of the Church in this matter? How has it been in your own life?

2. What is the deepest fact about Christ-like love as stated in I Cor. 13? How does the spirit of humility affect the Christian in his relation to the unsaved? What is said of the enthusiasm of this love? What is said of the necessity of patience and perseverance?

3. What is the tap root of all sin? How does unbelief affect us in our thought regarding the condition of unbelievers, and also regarding God's power to save them? What does history prove as to the necessity for faith in Christ, if the world is to be saved? Tell the story of the Japanese major.

4. What great message of the Bible is outstanding from first to last? Why is a true life necessary if we would seek to be used of God? Why is it also necessary if we would hope to be influential with men? Tell the story of the Christian in Illinois who won his unbelieving neighbor to Christ.

5. How does constant communion with God help a man in Christian service? Cite the instances in Christ's life mentioned to indicate his habit of cultivating communion with the Father. Cite the instances given to show that Christ was accustomed to pray in connection with the manifestation of God's power among men. Tell the story of the woman who could not eat until her husband was converted.

6. Why must we know the Bible in order to attain efficiency in personal work? What is Paul's statement to Timothy about the Scriptures? How do the Scriptures nourish our souls? What does God intend us to find in the record of the lives recorded in the Scriptures? What is said about unopened Bibles explaining the deterioration evident in many homes? Tell the story of the lawyer who cultivated the habit of daily Bible reading every morning.

PRAYER: *Help me, O Master, to be a recruiting agent for Thee, always eager to win others to enlist in Thy cause.*

## STUDY VII

### TAKING GOD INTO ACCOUNT

#### First Day: God Only Can Save

Some things may look alike on the surface which are different at the foundations. Paul speaks, in Acts 20: 24, of "the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." It is to this Gospel that he refers in his letter to the Galatians, 1: 6-9, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another, [for it is false teaching]; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." He repeats the anathema. Then he unfolds the true Gospel which teaches that there is one only salvation for men, and that is God's provision by the death of Jesus Christ, whose atonement avails for all who in penitence for their sin, and by faith in Christ as God's anointed Saviour, accept Him as crucified on Calvary for their sins and raised again for their justification.

Many teachers today, who purport to be loyal to evangelical religion, are perverting that one true Gospel. They talk about "an improved social order," as if such a desired condition could be realized unless individuals are saved as individuals. Every Christian should seek every application possible of the principles taught by Jesus Christ to every phase of human need, individually and collectively, but disappointment awaits that man who imagines that such improved conditions can ever come by "reformation and self-development." There is only one way of solving human problems of betterment, and that is by the divine regeneration of individual lives. After that, saved men should grow steadily along every line of devotion to the betterment of social, industrial, and economic conditions, as the fruit of our living out "the mind of Christ," as it must transform human relationships.

No man can regenerate a human heart. No man can cleanse a human soul. No man can sanctify and keep a human life. God only can do these things. Our Lord said (John 6: 44): "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." Nor is this an arbitrary method, as Christ proceeds to make plain, saying (v. 45), "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews asserts (1: 1, 2) that "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." John declares concerning Jesus Christ (1: 14) that he was "full of grace and truth." Thus in Christ, and Christ only, we have the truth in its fullness. Jesus himself declared, in John 14: 6, to inquiring Thomas: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." We need not multiply Scripture to show that this is the clear teaching of the New Testament. To evade it or ignore it, is fatal to any program that hopes for the salvation of mankind unto God.

*PRAYER: God of all grace, help me to be true to Thy Word, and to realize that to Thee alone men must look to be saved.*

## **Second Day: Christians Are God's Instruments**

While God is the only agent of salvation, he uses two instruments, his revealed truth and his human children, in making his salvation known. We have shown that it is his plan to have his followers become his constant witnesses, and his faithful intercessors, in carrying out his plan to save a lost world. Paul declares to us, in I Cor. 3: 9, that "we are laborers together with God." Then he adds to them (vv. 9-11) and to us: "Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereupon. . . . For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." This work to which Paul referred was his ceaseless declaration to the Corinthians, and all who would hear, this same Gospel of the grace



of God, which provides salvation for sinful men through Jesus Christ.

The great and real danger is that we should forget that we are God's instruments, and imagine that God is a laborer together with us. That is the mistake of many who fail to realize God's dominant place in the work in which he is using us. Some years ago the writer was visiting a missionary in Syria, who related the following story. He had become discouraged in his work, for he had failed in his efforts to win to Christ several men who lived in his field. He knew the fault could not be in God, and he did not know what was wrong with himself. So he decided to give God one full week in which to show him what he needed to know in order to be a more fruitful servant. He opened his Bible at the beginning, and as he turned its pages, very soon the fact dawned upon him that everything depended upon God in a supreme sense, as he had not paused to realize in all his life before. This was made strikingly clear at Jericho, where God said, in effect, to Israel: "We must take this city in such a way that the people will realize that it is not the work of men, but of God." He wanted the people to realize that it would be a good thing for them to have Israel's God for their God. So Jericho was taken, not by man's power. It was the manifest gift of God to his people.

My friend said that he made a list of names of the people whom he had been trying to win to Christ, and lifted them up to God in daily intercession. He had been asking God to help him convert them. Now he asked God to do his own divine work in their lives, to predispose their minds and hearts and wills by his mighty grace. Through the week he went on turning over the pages of his Bible, and the truth kept growing more and more evident. On Friday of that week a young man came to see him, whose name was on the list, deeply concerned about his salvation. He was also anxious about his father, whose name was also on the list. God was manifestly working. On Monday my friend started out to call on all of those men, who were scattered about the Lebanon hills. He hardly dared to hope that all had made their decisions; but every one of the men whose names were on his list decided for Jesus Christ. With a shining face, he declared that he would be a different missionary all the rest of his life.

In previous Studies, and in those to follow, we are giving place to the fact that God needs loyal men and women to be his instruments in this great task of the Church, and that God is ever seeking such to be usable in his hand. But at this time the great truth to realize is that it is only as God is recognized as the source of power, and we look to him to do his work of grace through us, that we may hope to see a mighty wave of salvation sweep over the earth.

PRAYER: *O Christ, we hear Thee saying, "Without me ye can do nothing." Help us to abide in Thee, as the branch abides in the vine, that we may bear fruit to the glory of the Father.*

### Third Day: God Does Divine Things Today

There are those who admit that God was in direct touch with men in the time of the Commonwealth of Israel, and in the beginnings of the Christian Church, who however hesitate to think that he is ready to do divine things now. They question whether the words of Christ in John 14: 12, apply to us now: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." But one thing is certain, if the words of Christ mean anything, they teach that he intended us to know that just as God was working in Christ himself, so God will work in us, *if we believe in him*. When our Lord commanded his disciples to wait for the promise of the Father, and declared that power would be given unto them when they had received the Holy Spirit, it is clear that he did so because they could never do of themselves what God would do through them. We have already noted how Peter magnified the fact that the only explanation of their lives and deeds, in the days following Pentecost, was the fact that the living God was working in and through them.

There is a widespread notion today that because we live in a world of law we cannot expect God to hear and answer our prayers, as if the prayers made any difference with God's dealings in our lives. A young sophomore from college was telling some farmers at the village grocery all about this realm of law, and how foolish it was to suppose we could have such freedom in our relations with our Heavenly Father as some people imagine. Turning to one of

the farmers, he said: "If you were to let go of that knife in your hand, it would instantly fall to the floor, because of the law of gravitation." Quietly the farmer tossed it up and stuck it in the wooden ceiling, whereupon the sophomore exclaimed: "Oh, but there are also other laws." Ah, yes. There are other laws also. The unscientific fact about this modern teaching is that it presumes to speak from the realm of physical sciences and ignores entirely the marvelous realm of the liberty of the spirit. Today men are entering many spheres of "nature below man" and doing amazing things that nature left to itself could never do. It is man's free spirit, whose characteristic is its mastery over matter, that is doing these things.

Our actual experience has thus given us a scientific conception of the freedom with which interference is possible in the midst of a thousand laws, without in the least doing injury to those laws, but simply by playing higher laws over against those in the lower sphere. And this is the only scientific attitude for us to maintain toward God's liberty of movement in the midst of his world. Our Lord Jesus Christ took special pains to teach us that God is our Father (Matt. 10: 29-31), and that he is vitally interested in each individual human life. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." Look through a microscope at a drop of water at a needle's point and realize the amazing infinity involved in God's thought of minute details.

Consider the teaching of Christ about God as our Father, and apply it in the light of our own experiences. Imagine a child coming to an earthly father and asking for something, and that father replying to his child that we live in a world of law, and it is absurd for the child to suppose it possible for his request to make any difference in the father's dealings with the child! Such superficial thinking would be amusing, if so many did not accept it as true. When we realize the liberties that obtain in an earthly home in the realm of the spirit, dominating all kinds of details in the physical realm, and how the prayers of a child for many reasons are certain to make a difference with what the father may do; how

can we fail to appreciate immediately how much vaster the liberty of our Heavenly Father must be in that same realm of the spirit which at once controls the physical and also influences much of the spiritual.

But beyond this intellectual appreciation of the reasonableness of our belief in God's immediate interest in us, and his readiness to hear and answer our prayers, doing divine things as Christ taught us he would, we have the actual experience of those who have taken God at his word and proved that he makes good. Science gives first place today to the laboratory method. So do the children of God who test his promise, after meeting the plain conditions. Thousands of humble, loyal children of God are daily proving that he hears and answers prayers in a very direct and unmistakable way. The truth is supremely vital to the right attitude on the part of Christians in our day, if we are to give God his right of way in our lives, in the hope that we may prevail in prayer to Him to pour out upon all flesh a mighty manifestation of his saving grace, until multitudes in all sections of the globe shall proclaim Christ Lord.

*PRAYER: Father in heaven, help me to take the teaching of Thy Son, my Lord, regarding Thy concern for me personally, as unquestioned truth, so that I may enter into such conscious relation to Thee as Thy child, as will give such meaning to my life as it could never otherwise have.*

#### **Fourth Day: Expectant Faith Honors God**

When the psalmist wrote (Psalm 62: 5): "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him," he touched the heart of a believer's right relation to God. But his words do not describe the attitude of the average Christian of our time. We are not expecting God to do things now, as we should. We have a striking illustration in the account of the feeding of the multitude by our Lord. All four gospel records tell the story, which would indicate its importance. Our Lord asked Philip the question (John 6: 5): "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" The next verse contains an illuminating side light in the statement: "And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do." Evidently he wanted to see how much faith in him they would re-

veal. He had been doing wonderful things all that day. How keenly he must have been disappointed when they ignored all that he had done as bearing upon the situation before them, saying in substance: "It cannot be done, for there is not money enough." Philip answered him, "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them." How it must have hurt him!

Then we read of the way the disciples would have solved the problem (Matt. 14: 15): "His disciples came to him saying, Send the multitude away that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals." How many times have we felt that way, as we have faced the multitudes in our great cities, in spiritually desert places, without the Bread of Life, and night coming down upon their souls. If we could only get rid of them! But behold the answer of our Lord (v. 16), "But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat." Imagine the astonishment of those disciples. They had nothing with which to feed the people; yet Jesus told them to do it. How could they consider this a practical suggestion of the Lord? The trouble with them was that they were measuring the situation by the visible assets of men and money, just as we generally do, and leaving the Christ with his divine resources out of account entirely.

Jesus knew their thoughts, and asked them (Mark 6: 38): "How many loaves have ye? Go and see." What he wanted was that they should discover, not how much they had, but how little. When the five loaves and two fishes were reported, note the statement which they made (John 6: 9): "But what are they among so many?" What is the use talking about it? Although the Master had said they need not depart, giving the assurance that it could be done, yet they never once awoke to the fact that he might do it. Then Jesus commanded the little lunch to be brought to him, and we read, Matt. 14: 19, that "looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitude."

It was in that moment that he lifted his eyes to heaven and prayed that he taught his unbelieving, unexpected disciples the great lesson of that hour: "You had quite forgotten God. God is still living, the great Creator of life and all the resources of life. Your little and God can do it. You had been thinking only of the



power of man, as if God had no resources available for you. You had quite forgotten God." Then in a few moments those disciples were doing it. Though they had nothing of themselves, they were actually feeding the multitude. And yet how thoroughly they realized that they were not doing it, and that God was doing it. Ah, yes. There we have the picture of what is going on in the average church today. God wants us, and wants our little; but he also wants us to know that he is ever waiting to do for us and through us things we can never do alone. How it must hurt him, as it hurt Christ that day, when we quite forget him as our available God now, as ever! In all our dealings with people whom we seek to win to Christ, we must ever feel as those disciples felt as they fed the multitude. While we are doing it yet we are not doing it; God is doing it, though using us as his instruments.

There is a faith, common among Christians, which accepts Jesus Christ as Saviour. There is a certain faith of obedience that seeks to some degree to obey his will along some lines of service. There is a faith of submission, that will bear and suffer without murmuring. But the element of faith that is largely lacking in the experience of the average Christian is the faith of constant expectation from God, that eagerly rests in his promises and counts upon his divine help. Yet this faith honors God as no other does. And it is vital to a larger Christian growth and service that we cultivate this expectation from God in this living faith that will not doubt his promises. No man ever truly did this who did not find that God always makes good and keeps his promises.

*PRAYER: Open the eyes of my faith, O God of all power, so that I may realize that Thine angels are all about me, though I had no suspicion of the fact. May I hear Jesus say to me, as of old: "Fear not; only believe."*

### **Fifth Day: Not Power, but Channels of Power**

The truth contained in the foregoing lessons leads to a distinction which we venture to suggest, believing that its recognition is immediately helpful to all who keep it in mind. We read in Psalm 62: 11, "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God." We have noted that service brings power,

and that men everywhere are seeking power in some form. The explanation of all this desire for power is that power accomplishes certain things which we desire to have accomplished. Just here we discover the line of cleavage between man's ambition in the realm of having, and his aspirations in the realm of being. It is the distinction between the desire to glorify ourselves in the eyes of men, and the desire to glorify God in all that we do and all that we are. The true Christian seeks to have those things accomplished which only God can do. He is not so anxious to have the power in his own hand, as to see that power at work which transforms and emancipates sinful lives.

In the familiar parable which we call the parable of the Vine and the Branches (John 15: 1-8), we are accustomed to emphasize the great thought therein to be the necessity of our abiding in Christ, as the condition of our best living. That is to say, the relationship between our Lord and ourselves is most prominent in our minds. But study the passage again and note the words "and my Father is the husbandman." Both the vine and the branches are for the husbandman. It is he who taketh away the unfruitful branch. It is he who pruneth the fruitful branch that it may bear more fruit. Note also the emphasis in v. 8, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." Ah, yes. Christ ever sought to have his disciples realize that the great objective was to glorify God. It is God who ever "worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2: 13). We can only work out what he works in, when it comes to being recipients of his power.

It becomes apparent, therefore, that God does not so much separate himself from us as he gives us of his power; but he exercises his power in and of himself, using us as the channels of that power. How clearly the disciples realized this when they were feeding the multitude. Now when we realize this truth, we are the more emptied of self, as we look to God to do his own work through us, and we are in much less danger of forgetting that God is ever the source of power. Our thought of the slightest self-sufficiency is gone. We recall the sad mistake that Moses made at the rock in the wilderness (Num. 20: 10), when he said: "Must we fetch you water out of this rock?" As if Moses and Aaron could

have done it! That fatal slip on Moses's part shut him out of Canaan, as the leader of Israel. It was so vital that the people should never for a moment forget their utter dependence on God. And it is just as vital now in our lives. We are in danger, because of our presumption at times, of missing the blessing.

Hence let us cultivate earnestly the appreciation of the truth that we are only channels of power. We are to study to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not to be ashamed (II Tim. 2: 15): by study of Scripture, by study of men, by study of methods, fitting ourselves to be better instruments in God's hand. Then we are to be as tools ready at his hand, to use as he sees best. This is the significance of Paul's appeal in Rom. 12: 1, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." He also tells us in the next verse how to know when we are usable at God's hand: "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

PRAYER: *Teach me, O Father, this intimate relation with Thee, wherein I shall not fail to do all that I should to be ready for Thy use, and at the same time shall not fail to look to Thee the source of all power in every service Thou dost give me to perform.*

### Sixth Day: No Case Too Hard for God

That is a very significant statement which God gives us by the mouth of his prophet Jeremiah (32: 27), "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for me?" It challenges us today, quite as much as in any former time. Of course we understand that in this statement God does not ignore all that he teaches elsewhere about the conditions which must be met before we can go to him with acceptable and prevailing prayer. But it does mean that when we give him the response of obedient wills, with an eager, expectant faith, there is no limit which our unbelief should dare to fix to the power which he will exercise along the lines of his revealed will, when that exercise of power makes for the highest welfare of men and for the advancement of the

Kingdom of God upon earth. Christ makes it very plain that we may not always know what is best for us in specific requests which we make of God (Luke 11: 11-13). Sometimes we think we are asking for bread, when we are really asking for a stone, and he will not give it.

But in those matters where God has revealed his will to us, there we may "come boldly unto the throne of grace" (Heb. 4: 16), confident that we can never ask too much. And this applies particularly in the realm of seeking to be used of God in saving lost souls. For his will is clearly revealed touching this matter, as in Matt. 18: 14, where our Lord Jesus Christ teaches that "It is not the will of your Father who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." Again we have that strong statement of the apostle Peter (II Pet. 3: 9): "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Therefore no Christian should doubt that it is the will of God that every soul that is out of Christ should be saved. Hence in our prayers of intercession we may be absolutely confident that we are in the will of God, and we may continue in such importunate prayer as our Lord himself encouraged, when he taught, in Luke 18: 1, "that men ought always to pray and not to faint." Not only so; but it must follow that no case is ever too hard for God. This must be a constant inspiration to us when we face a difficult problem. It would be impossible for us; but it is not "too hard" for God. Hence we must never be discouraged because the task is a hard one.

More than once we have known of friends and relatives of unbelievers who had ceased to pray for their conversion, convinced that it was useless to do so. When asked if they considered the case too hard for God, they were always startled, for they at once saw how they had practically decided just that, since they had ceased to pray. Or possibly they felt that it was not God's will to save in such cases. That very state of mind betrayed the fact that such Christians did not have the right relation to God, and had missed that nearness to him possible for us, thus having such weak faith as to lack entirely that quickening sense of confidence in his readiness to do his divine work in answer to acceptable prayer.

More than once, in those same instances, new prayer covenants were made, and a new ministry of intercession was begun, which God honored by saving the friends whom those of weak faith had considered hopeless.

PRAYER: *Again we hear Thee saying, O Christ, "With God it is not impossible, though impossible for men."*

### Seventh Day: Suggestions for the Class

Paul points out the secret of the failures of mankind, in Rom. 1: 21. Men have imagined, in their pride of intellect, that they can get on without God, so they glorify him not as God, and their foolish heart is darkened. The same attitude of mind is as fatal in our day. Power is of God, now as it has ever been, and it always will be. He who is wise recognizes the fact and rightly relates himself to it.

1. What does Paul say to the Galatians about the one only true Gospel? Is the tendency today in much thinking about the improvement of the race to deny God his place? What must be done in us before we are saved that man is utterly unable to do? And that God can do?

2. In what sense are we laborers together with God? What is our danger in this connection? Tell the story of the missionary in Syria. What lessons should we find in that story?

3. What does Christ teach us about God's power being available for us today? What is the teaching so common about our living in a world of law? Wherein is this idea unscientific? What do we know of the freedom of men in the realm of the spirit? Illustrate God's liberty, as my Father in heaven, to answer my prayers, by my constant liberty to answer the prayers of my children in this same realm of law.

4. How does expectant faith honor God? Bring out the points in the record of the feeding of the multitude which illustrate our unbelief, on the one hand, and God's available power on the other.

5. Where is the source of all power? What is the truth emphasized in the parable in John 15: 1-8? What advantage do we have when we remember that we are simply channels of God's power?

6. Where does God say that nothing is too hard for him? What



does he mean to teach, and what not to teach, by that saying? What does it signify when Christians cease to pray for loved ones out of Christ?

PRAYER: *Forbid, O God, that I should so far forget Thee as to presume to be able to do Thy work among men without Thy power working in me. And help me ever to be usable in Thy hands in Thy service.*

## STUDY VIII

### HOW TO APPROACH PEOPLE

#### First Day: When Necessary, Study the Individual

Sometimes the individual whom we seek to win to Christ will be open-minded and responsive to our approach. In such case there is no distinctive problem to meet. But very often we are aware that the individual is not responsive, or sometimes he is antagonistic to the Christian appeal. It is because of these more or less difficult people that we have occasion to study methods of approach and efficient appeal. Here we may well recall the suggestion of the apostle James (1: 5) that if we lack "wisdom" we may receive it from God. This special knowledge of men Jesus possessed, as we note in John 2: 24, 25, and he used it in approaching people, as in the case of the Samaritan woman at the well of Sychar (John 4: 5-15).

When it is evident that the individual presents a problem, it usually proves to be a saving of time and a gain in effectiveness to make a study of certain important facts which may influence his attitude toward the claim of Christ. It will be important to study his *temperament*, that elusive something in a person that is always specially evident in his attitude toward things religious. One can speak more freely to an even-tempered person, whereas he must be guardedly patient and gentle in dealing with another who is nervous and irritable. Such people are very likely to feel that they have not been fairly dealt with, and will be found to question the sincerity of Christians and also to doubt the love of God.

Frequently one's *circumstances* will throw a line of light which will enable you to be wise, whereas you would be at a decided disadvantage if ignorant of these conditions. When you know his circumstances, try to put yourself in the place of the individual, and seek to appreciate his point of view. Often one's *companions* will reveal the susceptible point. Paul reminds us of the possibilities here when he wrote to the Corinthians (I Cor. 15: 33) "evil

communications corrupt good manners." Harmful companions will deter a somewhat responsive soul. Further, it is evident that a person's *weaknesses* should be understood. One vulnerable point may be fatal. Remember the "heel of Achilles." When Paul urged the Ephesians (6: 10-18) to put on "the whole armor of God," his point was that unless they should be "able to quench all of the fiery darts of the wicked," they were not safe, for one is enough to kill. Sometimes the real weakness is not on the surface, though at first glance you might think you had discovered it. It may be hidden; but you must find it before you can be used effectively to help definitely the individual concerned.

Then it will prove helpful to discover one's *strong points*, for two reasons. First, you may often draw one into the atmosphere of church life and service by persuading him to assist in the use of a musical gift, either vocal or instrumental. A young man was once urged to join a Bible class in order to become a member of a baseball team, made up of members of the class. The invitation had just one objective, which was realized within six months. That young man became a member of the Church and set himself to win some of his friends to Christ. Sometimes, however, it will be the part of wisdom to avoid one's strong point, if it should prove to be intellectual skill in argument. As illustrated later on in this Study, an attempt to argue with such a one will hinder rather than help the situation.

PRAYER: *When I find a man overtaken with a fault, help me, O Lord, to be eager to restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, lest I also be tempted.*

## Second Day: Make an Appointment for an Interview

Experience has proved that it saves time to do this, and secures several advantages over the off-hand method of approach. Few people are responsive to a sudden, unexpected presentation of questions regarding their attitude toward the claim of Christ. They will be much more likely to prove amenable to kindly conversation, when an appointment has been made. To secure such an appointment is not usually as difficult as most people seem to imagine. Moreover, most people will respect a direct request for an interview

much more than when they know that you are beating about the bush as if to introduce the subject accidentally. Be perfectly open about the matter, remembering that it is business of vital importance, and trust God to move upon the mind and will of the individual. He will be with you as he was with Moses (Exodus 6: 11) in his interviews with Pharaoh, until Israel was set free.

Some years ago the writer asked a young bank clerk, on a Thursday, if he would be willing to make an appointment to have a frank talk about the subject of confessing Christ. He replied that it would do no good to discuss the subject. We assured him that we always gained something by such interviews, urged the fact that we were rather good friends, and that it would be a sympathetic talk. He soon agreed to come Saturday evening at eight o'clock. He was there at the stroke of the clock. To our astonishment the interview lasted just fifteen minutes by the watch. To every question he made answer with an unhesitating directness that indicated, not only that he had thought the subject through during those intervening hours, but also that the Spirit of God had touched him with constraining power. He announced his decision to become an earnest Christian. We prayed together and it was suggested that he should make a public statement regarding his decision the next evening at the young people's meeting. He did not feel equal to that, but promised to pray about it. At the meeting he quietly arose and made the statement. At my side a young lady uttered an exclamation of surprise. Immediately we asked her if she ought not to do the same thing. As she hesitated, we made an appointment for Tuesday afternoon to discuss the matter. When she opened the door at the appointed time, she said, "I have decided, as I should have done long ago."

The point already suggested is the vital fact to keep in mind in making an appointment. For two or three days the person is face to face with the necessity of having some sort of decision to make in answer to the expected appeal. And this means being face to face with God during the intervening days. The fact that an interview has been agreed to is of itself likely to make the individual conciliatory to the truth, more or less unconsciously, and the Holy Spirit has special access into that life, as meditation continues. The Spirit's work, as considered in Study III, Sixth Day, convinces of

sin and righteousness and judgment, and leads into the truth that makes us free, as indicated in John 16: 7-14. Instances could be multiplied to illustrate the value of this practice, as proved in actual experience, with all sorts of people. Let them agree to an appointment for an interview, and in most instances the will begins to yield to the Spirit of God.

*PRAYER: As Thine ambassador, O Lord, I go to win a hearing for Thy claims upon the allegiance of human lives. Therefore do Thou speak through me in arranging the audience, as well as in the conversation.*

### **Third Day: Have Others Pray with You for the Individual**

In the emphasis of the place of prayer bands we have stressed the value of the prayer covenant. We now wish to apply this emphasis in urging the necessity for special prayer in order to prepare properly for the particular interview which has been arranged. This definite prayer will ask God's help in your own preparation for the interview, and also that he will prepare the mind and heart and will of the individual to the point of a responsive attitude. All that has been said in Study VII about taking God into account should be in mind. Paul may plant and Apollos may water (I Cor. 3: 6, 7), but God gives the increase.

At this point we may secure entrance into a larger place in God's available grace, for we have a special promise, in Matt. 18: 19, 20, "that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Let it be recalled that the word translated "agree" is the Greek word *symphonize*. It does not mean a mere casual agreement of two people to ask for some particular thing. It means *two lives symphonized in Christ*, who is the key note in the orchestra, in whom all the instruments must be harmonized before there can be a symphony. Here is a challenge to every believer to have a co-worker in prayer who will be ready to enter into covenants of special intercession as occasion may arise. Take God at his word, thus honoring him, resting upon his promises, as you pray for blessing in the special interview.



During our pastorate in an eastern city, an expert accountant was a regular attendant at the morning services. He was decidedly critical in his references to certain church members whom he had found to be "smooth" in their business methods. After hesitating for some time, in view of his known critical attitude, the constraint to speak to him became very definite. Grudgingly he agreed that we might call at his home to talk about Christ's claim upon his open allegiance. He asserted that the interview would be a waste of time, but could not well refuse the request of his pastor to call at his own home. The appointment was made for three days ahead. Leaving his office we went directly to the home of one of God's saints, who was accustomed to nothing less than audacity of faith in prayer. And God delights in just that, for it honors him to ask great things, when it is known that the petition is according to his will. We confessed that we had not been faithful, and that we had been a coward about speaking to this man, not cultivating a definite burden for his salvation. That day we had obeyed and had made an appointment. A covenant for special prayer was made, as we knelt together, continuing through the three days intervening. On the evening of the call, we telephoned to the friend, who promised to pray from eight until ten o'clock.

On arriving at the home of the accountant, it was evident that he was greatly bored by the situation. But he was a gentleman and listened courteously. Never have we been more clearly conscious of the divine presence and power at work in a man's life. Again and again one felt that it was not the human words that had effect, so much as the work of the Holy Spirit, as the unwilling man changed his attitude from point to point, until it was almost ten o'clock. Suddenly he said: "Yes, I never realized the sin in my life which makes it necessary for me to take Christ as my Saviour. I had been complacent in my moral conduct. Yes, I will take Christ." We knelt together and asked God to complete the work he had begun. Without a doubt we attributed that experience to the prayer covenant with one who had the ear of the King, and with whom we had counted on God to do the work of transforming regeneration that he alone could accomplish in that man's life. It is a fair inference that many an attempt is a failure because God is not counted upon as he must be if a true work of grace is to be

achieved. James declares (4: 2) that "ye have not because ye ask not." He was writing to people who said their prayers every day, as we do. But James had reference to real asking, definite and specific, in expectant, confident faith in an available God, who is ever saying to men (Mal. 3: 10): "Prove me now herewith."

*PRAYER: Gracious Father of love and power, not willing that any should perish, O help me to be a laborer together with Thee in every attempt to be used of Thee in winning one and another to Christ.*

#### **Fourth Day: Begin with a Confession of Unworthiness**

Probably the most common attitude of mind on the part of the average person who is an unbeliever, or a secret believer, is the feeling that he is quite as good as the average church member whom he knows. And it may often be true in so far as his daily living is concerned. It is frequently difficult for a casual observer to discover wherein some church members differ in their daily practices from certain of their neighbors who make no profession of faith in Christ. In talking to all such, any manifestation of a feeling of superiority on the part of the Christian will not incline them to a sympathetic hearing, but will intensify the critical spirit. Any "holier-than-thou" manner, which is never justified in any circumstances, will be doubly fatal in an interview with these self-respecting moralists.

Hence it is always well to begin the conversation with an emphasis of our own unworthiness, in so far as our human nature is concerned, apart from the grace of God. Was it not Baxter who said, as he saw a drunkard staggering across the street: "There goes Baxter but for the grace of God"? In the case of the accountant mentioned in yesterday's lesson, who was of this critical spirit, we began our conversation somewhat as follows: "Mr. S——, in coming to talk with you about confessing Christ and coming into the communion of the Church, let me say at the start that I do not presume to be any better man than yourself, in so far as my human nature is concerned. Let me also emphasize the fact that the Christian Church has no perfect people in it, but is made up of imperfect sinners, who hope in a Saviour who redeems us by his

grace, not because we deserve salvation, but because we confess our sins and, in honest penitence because of them, turn in faith to Christ as God's anointed Saviour."

It was evident that the criticism, which seemed likely to be expressed, had been disarmed. There was nothing to justify its repetition after that confession. Moreover, we were at once face to face with man's sin as the reason for his need of a Saviour, and with the fact that mere morality is not enough to enable a man to be at peace with God. The vital truth of Scripture to be emphasized in connection with the confession of every man's unworthiness before God is that salvation is by grace alone. Many who are at once critical about church members, and fairly complacent about themselves, need to have this truth brought home. Use such Scripture for this emphasis as Eph. 2: 8-10, Col. 1: 3-6, II Thess. 2: 16, Rom. 3: 23-26, John 1: 17.

Moreover, many Christians hesitate to speak to others just because of this sense of unworthiness. They feel unworthy to represent their Lord and fear that those to whom they would venture to speak might think so. But this confession makes it possible. A high school boy once wrote a letter to his chum in substance as follows: "Dear Bob—I have hesitated to speak to you about confessing Christ because I have not felt worthy to do so, for I believe you are a better boy than I am. I am sure you are a Christian at heart, and I know you would receive a great blessing if you would confess your faith and hope in Christ. I want you to have that blessing, and I hope you will come into the communion of the Church. Will you not think and pray about it?" The Christian could not have sent that letter unless he had written his confession therein, and he always believed the confession influenced his friend to take the step, which he did at the next communion service.

*PRAYER: Empty me of any sense of self-sufficiency, or self-importance, O God, and help me to magnify Thy wonderful grace which Thou hast revealed to sinful men.*

### **Fifth Day: Find Every Possible Common Ground**

One of the illuminating passages of Scripture bearing upon the subject of method in Christian approach to people is found in Acts

17: 22-31. The Authorized Version is unfortunate in its translation, as it tells us that Paul accused the Athenians of being "too superstitious." That would have been a most tactless introduction indeed to those proud Athenians, who deemed themselves the intellectual superiors of all men. Paul had far more wisdom than that. The Revised Version gives us the correct story of what he said: "Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are very religious." Let us keep in mind that people may be very religious, without being greatly concerned about morality. These are the very people who would be complimented by being called religious. Then Paul proceeded to say that he worshiped the same "Unknown God" that they worshiped. Moreover he knew that his Scriptures would have no authority for those Athenians, so he quoted one of their own poets in giving expression to a great truth, which his own Scriptures taught and which was admirably expressed by the Greek poet. They at once realized that he was not an ignorant man.

Thus Paul came to common ground with his hearers at every possible point, until they were favorably disposed to listen to his message. Then he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection. It has been said that Paul tried to be intellectual at Athens and that his visit there was a failure. There is no foundation for the statement, for we read that "certain men clave unto him and believed," though some mocked and others said they would hear again. Just the results that he always had, and that our Lord himself had. The method is vindicated in the experience of many. The writer was accompanying a gifted and saintly missionary in India as he conducted a street preaching service. After the service he said he had begun his sermon by quoting a sentence from the Bhagavad Gita, and then quoting an almost identical sentence from the words of Jesus, calling the attention of his hearers to the fact that they were so much alike. The people were at once interested. Jesus must have said some things worth hearing about, if he could approach the wisdom of their own sacred writings. He then, like Paul, led his hearers to a message of the truth as it is in Christ.

The principle here stated involves another point of importance. One will be compelled at times to disagree with certain expressed views of unbelievers touching fundamental subjects of

Christian faith. But there should be the constant effort to maintain as much common ground as possible. To do this one must guard earnestly against slipping away from points of agreement, or near-agreement, to differences of opinion about secondary and non-essential details. Gently but faithfully seek to avoid departure from the big fundamentals of faith and life. Make the most possible of all that is hopeful in the other man's view, pressing at this side or that until it conforms to the teaching of Scripture. In the nature of things there is less ground for disagreement when the big fundamentals are kept to the fore.

PRAYER: *Give me an open mind to see the truth wherever found, O Spirit of the living God, who guides into all truth and who ever helps men who are "feeling after God, if haply they might find him."*

### Sixth Day: Discover His Degree of Faith

One rule of supreme importance must always be put into immediate practice the moment anyone is willing to discuss the subject of his attitude toward the claims of Christ. That rule is to discover, at the earliest possible moment, what he believes. Note how Jesus did this in the case of the man born blind, whom he had healed (John 9: 35-38). Never encourage a rehearsal of doubts and difficulties. Sometimes this cannot be avoided, but often it is unwittingly allowed when it is not necessary. Ground is always lost when a man is dwelling upon his doubts and questionings. Help him to realize that the pathway to growing strength in conviction is in the direction of clear belief, justified by facts, as over against doubts and uncertainties. Note how Jesus helped Martha to increase her faith at the grave of her brother (John 11: 25-27). Bismarck once said: "Tell me what you believe: I have doubts enough of my own." The principle is valid. You might gather weeds from your garden forever, and have no harvest. Plant some seed, and fruitage will follow.

Many people believe more than they realize. They have been looking away from their faith to negative matters of unbelief. Help them to discover how much they really do believe. A young physician came to the writer, declaring that in the medical college



he had lost his faith, that he did not know what to believe, but felt the need of some sort of an anchor that might help to stop his drifting. It was suggested that he begin with something that he could not doubt. With a cynical smile, he said: "Do you suppose there is anything I cannot doubt?" "Yes," we replied, "you cannot doubt that the most important thing in the world is character. If there be any reality in life, character is the supreme value." He was candid all the way along, and quickly said he was compelled to believe this statement to be true. He was urged to hold faithfully to this fundamental truth as a strong rock on which to build a positive, working faith. Then we suggested another fact that he could not doubt, namely, that Jesus Christ is the finest character the world has ever known. Thoughtfully he agreed again. "Another big rock to stand upon. Hold to both of these. Moreover, there is a third thing you cannot doubt, if you will be honest with the evidence. You cannot doubt that Christ's character is the daily incarnation of his own teaching about how to live." He thought that statement through and said: "I believe it." We then urged that if he would take Christ's plain teachings for his own rule of daily living, in faithful obedience, he would begin to develop a character which would become more and more like Christ's. This would be inevitable, as he came to realize the truth of Christ's teaching about our relation to God and our fellowman. He exclaimed: "That is what I want!" His rapid growth into increasing faith out of an increasing experience was inspiring to see.

Some years ago we called on a young teacher, whose father was an agnostic. Her mother was a church member, but negative. The father had influenced her thinking. When asked as to her attitude toward the claims of Christ, she replied: "Why, I don't believe in the supernatural." Instead of beginning an argument on that subject, we asked: "Will you please tell me what you do believe?" Rather promptly she answered: "I believe that Jesus Christ was the best man that ever lived." "Do you really believe that?" we asked, in order to commit her to her definite statement. She reaffirmed her assertion. Then we said: "Miss D——, I have a book in my library entitled 'The Christ of History.' The author begins just where you say you stand, declaring that many earnest people believe that Christ was the best man that ever lived. Then

he goes on to prove that Christ was more than that. Don't you think you would like to read that book?" She said it did sound interesting. The next day the book was left at her door.

Some seven weeks passed, during which she had attended the church services regularly. To our astonishment she came to us with the statement that she would like to be received into the Church, if we thought her ready. In answer to the question as to what had led her to such a decided change of attitude, she said: "That book had so many references to the New Testament that I had to examine it in order to see if the arguments were consistent. I had never studied the gospels before. What a silly thing I was to say that I did not believe in the supernatural, when I had given only a very superficial consideration to the subject! But I have just been devouring those wonderful gospels with a hungry heart. I have accepted Jesus Christ as my Saviour, and I desire to confess him as my Lord." It all came as a result of turning away from her negative position by asking the simple question that discovered her degree of faith.

*PRAYER: Help me to hear Thee say, O Lord, "Fear not: only believe," and to remember to encourage others to begin with such faith as they have in building intelligent allegiance to the truth.*

### Seventh Day: Suggestions for the Class

There are exceptions to all rules; but it is believed that as one gains in actual experience in approaching people, with a view to winning them to Christ and the Church, the suggestions in this Study will be confirmed as wise. In the nature of things we must seek to predispose favorably all with whom we talk. It is equally evident that good psychology demands that we realize that people are always more interested in what they do believe, than in any question of doubt, even though they may have dropped into the abnormal habit of talking more about their doubts than their faith.

1. When is it necessary to study the individual to be won? What kinds of temperament are there? Name the next four things to discover in a person whom you may study. What two considerations are mentioned in dealing with one's strong points?

2. Why is it desirable to make an appointment with one who

presents a problem? What special advantage results from having an interval between the time of making the appointment and the conversation itself? Tell the experience had with the bank clerk.

3. What is the teaching about collective prayer in Matt. 18: 19, 20? What is the teaching in I Cor. 3: 6, 7? Tell the story of the expert accountant and the prayer covenant made in connection with his case.

4. What is the general feeling of people not in the Church as to their lives compared with those of church members? Why is it wise to begin conversation with such by making a confession of our own unworthiness? What was the substance of the statement made in beginning the conversation with the expert accountant? Name some of the passages given to emphasize that we are saved by grace, not by works. Tell the story of the high school boy who wrote a letter to his chum.

5. How did Paul secure common ground in his sermon to the Athenians? What similar thing did the missionary in India do? How shall we maintain common ground, after finding a degree of it in conversation?

6. What is the first thing to do when one is willing to discuss the subject of personal faith? Tell the story of the young physician. What statement does it illustrate? Tell the story of the young teacher who imagined that she did not believe in the supernatural. What helped her?

PRAYER: *Give me the wisdom that cometh down from above, O God, in approaching men for Thee, and help me ever to remember that Thou art waiting to do Thy work in their lives.*

## STUDY IX

### PRINCIPLES FOR DEALING WITH PEOPLE

#### First Day: Keep to the Positive Side

Every fact in the realm of knowledge, however plain and manifest, is touched by a mystery that no man fully comprehends. On the other hand, there is no mystery so great, baffling human research, but what you will find touching it at some point a plain, undeniable fact. There are two ways of approaching the study of anything. One is to begin with the fact, accept the fact for all it is worth, and push along the line of the fact until you reach the mystery, which you will always do. Then never deny the fact because of the mystery; but by making more and more of the fact, push the mystery further back. The other way is to begin with the mystery and refuse to accept the fact until the mystery is solved. The first is the scientific method. All the progress in human knowledge has been realized by that method of procedure. The second method is unscientific and unreasonable, for it betrays unwillingness to be honest with facts. Such a position is hopeless for the individual and for the world.

The greatest fact in the world is life. The greatest mystery in the world is life. The greatest life in the history of the world is Christ. What now shall we do with the fact of Christ, notwithstanding the mystery of Christ? If we be scientific, reasonable, honest, we will accept the fact of Christ, recognizing the value which has come to the world from the influence exerted by his life and teaching and redeeming love. We will hold tenaciously to this fact of Christ, with all that it is worth in untold blessings to men. We will adopt the laboratory method of modern science and put to the test his claims and promises, not by taking any other man's statement, but by faithful experiment in our own lives, in order to prove whether he makes good. Thus we push the mystery of Christ further back; for we may challenge the world to produce the individual who has honestly tested Christ at every point who does not testify that he makes good.

It is not necessary to be able to explain a fact in order to be certain about it. No man can fully explain electricity; but we know it is an undeniable fact, and we enjoy its light and heat and power, making the most of the fact, while we push the mystery further back. So we need not understand all about Christ in order to secure and enjoy the blessings which he has made available for us. The man whom Jesus restored to sight (John 9: 25-38) could not explain how it was done; but he knew that whereas he had been blind he had his sight. He rested his faith in Christ upon the actual experience of his life. His method was strictly scientific. The same thing was true of the apostle Paul, who wrote to Timothy (II Tim. 1: 12), "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." They held to the positive side and built their faith in Christ.

Nothing is more vital than this principle in dealing with those who are seeking the truth. Some years ago the writer was in Hong Kong, speaking under the auspices of the Young Men's Christian Association to groups of Chinese and foreigners. Among them was a Mr. Cheong, who asked for an interview, saying that he could not seem to understand Christianity. He had studied in England and had lately secured an English Testament which he had begun to read. There were so many items he did not understand, references to people of past ages, and other points that were not clear. He had begun to underscore all these items that were not clear, and the book was getting rather black as a result. If only some one would take the time to explain all these items, perhaps he could get light. We asked: "Mr. Cheong, why do you want light? Is it to satisfy your curiosity about mysteries? Or is it to live by the light?" With some emotion he replied that when in England he had become convinced that Christianity must be the true religion. He felt that if he could understand it, he might help his people, especially the young men.

Assuring him that we could help him, and by a better method than explaining all the things he had underscored, we urged him to get another Testament and read carefully through the four gospels and the Acts *underscoring everything he did understand*, everything that *was clear*, and whenever he came to anything not



quickly understood, to pass it by without a moment's delay. "*Continue underscoring what is clear.* After you have read these five books through, read them a second time, and you will underscore more than at the first reading. Then read them again the third time, and you will find still more that is clear. Do this, and you will know what it means to be a Christian, for the Holy Spirit will guide you into the truth." He agreed. Day after day he would come into the Association saying that he was getting light and more light. He came fully into the light and became an earnest Christian, proving most helpful to the young men in south China.

PRAYER: *Help me ever to turn toward the light, rather than to ponder mysteries, and guide me, O God, into the light that leads to life eternal.*

## **Second Day: Make Plain Our Need of Christ**

In the first Study we set forth some simple illustrations to make clear beyond question man's need of a Saviour from sin and its fatal results. The main reason why so many people are indifferent about their relation to Jesus Christ is that they fail to realize their need of Him. A striking study which illustrates our need of divine help is found in Christ's conversation with Nicodemus (John 3: 1-21). It is evident that Nicodemus was one of those mentioned in John 2: 23, 24, who believed that Jesus was a prophet, but to whom "Jesus did not commit himself." Nicodemus came to see whether Jesus could prove to him that he was the Messiah. The fact that Jesus responded would indicate that Nicodemus was sincere at heart, though presuming to be the judge to decide as to the standing of Jesus.

But the conversation took a most unexpected turn. Instead of discussing Jesus, it was turned toward Nicodemus, to make him realize his own great spiritual need. So some people today have an idea that they are doing the Church quite a favor when they attend its services and contribute toward its support. They have never realized their need of Christ. Nicodemus had no question about his own security as a child of Abraham. But he was startled by the unexpected words of Jesus, as the Master cut from under his feet every human confidence in outward living: "Verily, verily,

I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Nicodemus was not born again, and he knew it, fine as he was morally. Moreover he was honest enough not to try to defend himself as being under the covenant of Jehovah, as a child of Abraham. His questions show how hard it is for a man of intellectual pride, and accustomed to being considered a leading citizen by his neighbors, to become as a little child in the humility of an honest confession of his sin, and the acknowledgment of his need of divine help. Christ made plain to Nicodemus God's provision, in a wonderful love, for man's salvation by sending his Son to be our Saviour. He then laid the responsibility upon Nicodemus to make his own decision as to what he would do in view of God's offered salvation, in those personal words, which also apply to us, "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Urge any man who is not ready to admit his need to read the gospels. The historic place which Christianity has made for itself will always justify this appeal.

Point out the fact that through the centuries man has proved his inability to save himself. Never compromise with this fundamental truth. Many cults today are seeking to present some other way than the way of the New Testament. But of all such the Lord of life has said (John 10: 1, 9), "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, [trying in vain to get in], the same is a thief and a robber. . . . I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." The apostle Peter faced the rulers of the Jews, in their self-sufficiency, and exclaimed, Acts 4: 12: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." The world needs this emphasis today.

*PRAYER: Help me to magnify my dependence upon Thee, O Master, so that I shall be doubly earnest in pressing the truth upon every soul that in Thee alone we have hope for eternal life.*

### **Third Day: Be Honest about the Fatality of Sin**

These principles of procedure may not all be demanded in any

one case, nor in any particular order. They are to be kept in mind as we deal with those who are out of Christ and the Church. Sometimes the individual will be one who has come to a place where he knows he cannot cover his sin even from the eyes of men. Many are not concerned about the fact that they are sinning in the sight of God, so long as they think men do not know. Many will tell you they "never did anything very bad," thus making it evident that they are not honest about their sin and will not face its fatal consequences. Although God has said (Gen. 2: 17), "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die"; yet they listen to that old lie of the devil (Gen. 3: 4), "Ye shall not surely die." There is but one alternative; unless sin is fatal, there is no need of a Saviour.

Recently we heard a church member make the statement that certain Jews whom he knew were very good Christians. Upon inquiry it appeared that what he meant was that in their daily life they were as ethical as the Christians he knew. What he really meant was that they were good citizens, just as some good Mohammedans might be. That man had no conception of the fatality of sin, for he evidently thought of sin as the overt acts which human law condemned, without taking into account the sin of self-will that refuses to acknowledge God's place in a man's life. Paul states the case very plainly in Rom. 8: 5-8, "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Add to this the statement of Christ in John 17: 3, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." Without this personal knowledge of God in Christ, the only possible end of the earthly life is spiritual death, as well as the death of the body.

It is very difficult for many to believe this. They know so many people who are nice and kind and honest, who are utterly indifferent to religious matters. Ask them about the attitude of these people toward Christ, and they will look as if the question were entirely unnecessary. Ask them about the prayer life of these

people, and they would smile, quite unable to understand the spiritual poverty thus revealed. So long as they are having a good time on earthly levels, and succeeding in business, they have only the vaguest notion of the fact that they are starving in the realm of their spiritual possibilities. Nor is this so surprising, since there are so-called Christian leaders today who smile at the idea of our needing Christ in order to solve the sin problem. They tell us the old-fashioned idea of a vicarious atonement is out of date. They are blind leaders of the blind, whose teaching has led more than one person known to the writer to make shipwreck of faith. Of course all such leaders are not interested in soul winning. Were the Church to look to them for spiritual quickening, there would never be another genuine revival of true religion with saving power, such as past years have known when the first constant emphasis has been the fact and fatality of sin.

*PRAYER: Help every soul to realize Thy teaching, O God, that "the human heart is deceitful and desperately wicked," until we cry: "God be merciful to me a sinner!" May Thy Holy Spirit make clear to us the truth that all else in life is vain, if we be without Christ and his salvation.*

#### **Fourth Day: Testify to Christ's Work of Grace in Your Own Life**

Nothing so strongly convinces people of the reality of Christ's saving and transforming power as the actual evidence revealed in the changed life of a man who was known to be living in indifference to God—either a life of open sin, or of persistent self-will—and who has forsaken that old life, having given himself to Jesus Christ as his divine Saviour, thereafter devoting his time, strength, brains, and money to the advancement of Christ's cause among men. Phillips Brooks was right when he said: "The great argument is not a syllogism: it is a man." When the apostles had been apprehended for healing a man, their defense could not be gainsaid, for we read in Acts 4: 14, "And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it." This is one reason why God has been able to use so mightily the testimony of such men as Jerry McAuley and Harry Monroe. Their trans-

formed lives were the final proof of the power of Jesus Christ to save and keep those whom he had lifted out of the pit.

The principle obtains in the life of every Christian who has had a real work of grace in his heart. In every such case a personal testimony as to what Christ has meant to you will be the most effective attempt you can make to win others to him. Many of the people whom you will meet will have had much the same environment that you have had, and they will be susceptible to your testimony. Some years ago a man went to an Easter service. It was his custom to go to church once a year to please his wife. On that Easter day the message was used of God to touch his conscience in view of his indifference to religious matters. He came again and soon became a regular attendant. He had been a fine man morally, honest in business, loving and faithful in his home, attractive in appearance and courteous in manner; but he had been Godless and Christless, giving no thought to them and feeling no need of doing so. After about a year he became a most earnest Christian, active in the whole life of the Church. He had been a Christian for three years, when he made this testimony:

"Four years ago I was forty years old. I had been fairly successful in business and was generally respected as a good citizen. I was happy in my home and felt that I needed nothing more to make life desirable. As to religion, I thought it was largely a combination of sentiment and will power, which one could have without going to church. So far as I could see, church members were very much like myself, and I had not the slightest sense of needing anything. But during those first months that I came to church I discovered that my whole life was a failure, so far as my immortal soul was concerned. I had constantly refused to give heed to an occasional sting of conscience when questions about my future arose. Three years ago I accepted Christ, and I am utterly amazed to realize the complete change in my life. Possibly a casual observer would not notice anything different about me from what he saw four years ago, for my practice in business has not changed; but my family and my close friends know the difference. For now we have a family altar in my home, and my wife and children hear the voice of prayer every day, where they never heard it before. Now Christ is at the heart of my business and my constant



friend in everything. I cannot understand how I ever got along so complacently without him."

This man was winning others to Christ through that testimony, and bringing more than one friend and neighbor, formerly equally indifferent, into the fellowship of Christ and the Church.

PRAYER: *Let me hear Thee saying to me, as Thou didst to one of old whom Thou didst save, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee."*

### **Fifth Day: Emphasize Christ's Rightful Claim upon Our Lives**

This particular appeal is to be made to that very large body of people who claim to believe and hope in Christ, but who have never given open allegiance to him by publicly confessing their faith and entering into the communion of the Church. We have this class mentioned in John 12: 42, 43: "Among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." Many secret believers today will not admit that this same explanation is applicable to their case; but the fact remains that in all such cases of unwillingness to be out-and-out for Christ, the reason will be found in their relations with men as contrasted with their relations to God.

Naturally the same considerations which have been mentioned in realizing the claim of Christ upon our own allegiance will have place as we press his claim upon every other life. One of the finest motives that can be urged upon a hesitant soul is the incentive to enter as fully as possible into Christ's plan for his own life, in order that God may use him in making his influence upon others the finest possible. In the case of fathers and mothers, their responsibility for the young lives that God has entrusted to them to shape for eternity should be most earnestly urged in persuading them to maintain right relations with God, in order that they may be true to their trust. We have noted the appeal for allegiance to a great cause that swept through the land when our men enlisted. It was then that those who willingly evaded their obligation and privilege were

counted "slackers." It is not a nice word, nor one we would desire to have applied to us; but just exactly this point should be courageously, though kindly, pressed home to all who profess to have accepted Christ's salvation and yet hesitate to be loyal to him and his cause, as it challenges us to be enlisted under his banner.

But the vital obligation goes deeper. It is suggested in the story of the Egyptian slave who was eager to serve his newly-found redeemer all the rest of his life, and counted this service his highest liberty. How can any intelligent soul catch a vision of what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for us, and be lethargic about loyalty to him and all that he holds dear? Quietly call attention to the fact that he left his throne in glory in order to bring salvation to us, going to his cross to make atonement for our sin, and now is ever making intercession for us at the throne of God. The Holy Spirit will bless this faithful effort to lift up Christ before men. Quote Paul's burning words in explanation of his own quenchless ardor in the Master's service, as found in II Cor. 5: 14, 15, "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

*PRAYER: May I not be ashamed to show my colors everywhere and always, O Christ. May I be eager to be known as Thy follower and to be used of Thee in helping others to find the way of life.*

### **Sixth Day: Use God's Word to Meet Special Points**

Christ's practice of this principle is the familiar fact in the gospel record. His followers should learn to use the Word of God as he used it. In his temptation, Matt. 4: 1-11, he was always ready to meet the suggestion of the tempter, from point to point, with the words, "It is written," and to state some phase of the truth that put the tempter to flight. In urging his claim to be the true Messiah, he quoted the words of David, in Psalm 110: 1, "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." David was their greatest hero, and Christ reminded them that David spoke by the Holy Spirit, as is declared in II Sam. 23: 2. This appeal was final. The leaders could not

answer him, though they hated him the more; but we read that "the common people heard him gladly."

Moreover, when the lawyer questioned him as to how he might inherit eternal life (Luke 10: 25-28), Christ did not simply use the Scriptures in his answer; he put the question to the lawyer himself as to what was the teaching. This method is often effective. Ask the person to find the text for himself, or hand it to him and ask him to read it. It is at once evident that this simple act will deepen the impression of the truth. Especially should the use of Scripture be practiced vigorously when one is ready to accept the authority of the Bible. Some are not willing to do this. A young lawyer once said to the writer that he saw no superiority in the Scriptures that would justify him in accepting them as his authority. He was told that he was described in I Cor. 2: 14. He reached for a Bible on the desk near by, turned to the passage, and read, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." He looked both surprised and convicted. He was the same lawyer mentioned in a former study who would not admit, at first, that he was lost; but who afterwards realized his need and accepted Christ.

Several years ago, when the writer was a student in the city of Cincinnati, Mr. Moody was holding meetings there. Some of us were helping in various ways, and the writer witnessed the following incident. At one of the after-meetings a lady remained, saying to Mr. Moody that she had tried his Christianity and it had not done her a bit of good. Mr. Moody said: "Do you mean to say that you have been trying for some days to do the will of God and have had no blessing?" She asserted that she had. After a moment's thought, Mr. Moody asked if she would be willing to kneel with him and repeat the words of a prayer. She did so, and he began the words of the Lord's Prayer. She followed him until he came to—"Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," which she did not repeat. Rather brusquely Mr. Moody asked: "Well, can't you say it?" She arose, saying: "Do you mean to tell me that I must forgive that woman before I can be a Christian?" She seemed honestly surprised, evidently not realizing the necessity.

Very earnestly Mr. Moody answered: "My dear Madam, I do not

say so; but God says so." Then he turned quickly to Matt. 18: 21-35, and read the parable of the servant whose Lord had forgiven him "that great debt," who refused in turn to forgive his fellow-servant, who owed him a hundred pence. He read it very effectively. The woman was growing pale as he proceeded. When he finished with those startling words, "So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts," he turned the book around and said: "That is your photograph." Sinking upon her knees, the woman exclaimed: "Oh, I never saw my sin before! Oh, if God will only forgive me, I will forgive everything!" Then Mr. Moody said kindly: "Well, you may get up then." She arose smiling through her tears. It all came from Mr. Moody's being able to say so definitely: "I do not say so; but God says so."

PRAYER: *Help us to realize that Thy Word is sharper than any two-edged sword, O God of truth, and that it will be blessed of Thee when we use it as Thy final authority for men.*

### Seventh Day: Suggestions for the Class

These principles will come to be familiar as one practices the application of them in personal work. Emphasize to yourself specially the suggestion of depending upon God's Word in pressing your points. Remember his promise by the word of the Prophet Isaiah (55: 11), "My word . . . shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

1. What is said about facts as related to mysteries? What is the scientific method of approaching the study of anything? How do these statements apply to Christ? What two men are mentioned as having a reasonable faith? Tell the story of the young Chinaman finding the light.

2. Why are people indifferent about the subject of salvation? What was the thought of Nicodemus in coming to Christ? How did Christ turn the conversation? How does this incident apply to the modern moralist? What is the record of man's failure to save himself? What was Peter's statement to the rulers about their need of Christ?

3. What attitude do many people maintain about their sins? What did the church member mean who called certain Jews good Christians? What statement of Paul is quoted here? What dangerous teaching is given out by so-called Christian leaders today?

4. What statement of Phillips Brooks is quoted at this point? What is the special value of a personal testimony? Tell the story of the man who attended an Easter service, describing him before and after he became a Christian.

5. To what class of people should we emphasize Christ's claim upon their lives? What considerations formerly mentioned to lead us to recognize Christ's claim will apply in our efforts to lead others to him? What is the deeper obligation? What statement of Paul is quoted here?

6. Mention instances where Christ used the Scriptures to meet different points in his experience. How was the lawyer answered who said he did not accept the authority of the Scriptures? Tell the story of the conversation of Mr. Moody with the woman who had not forgiven a neighbor. What parable did he use from God's Word? What was the explanation of the success of that interview?

PRAYER: *In connection with the use of all methods, and benefiting by the experience of others, help me, O Lord, ever to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who guides us into all truth.*



## STUDY X

### SCRIPTURE ANSWERS TO COMMON EXCUSES

#### First Day: Excuses Born of Fear

1. *"I am too great a sinner."* There are those who find it difficult to believe that salvation is for them. Their recognition of their sin is a hopeful fact to begin with, for they are more likely to respond to the truth than the indifferent. The message for them is Heb. 7: 25, where we are taught that Christ is "able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Point them to the case of Saul of Tarsus (I Tim. 1: 13-15), who counted himself one of the worst of sinners, yet who was gloriously saved. Stress Christ's own words about coming to publicans and sinners because they needed him, as recorded in Matt. 9: 11-13. Specially call attention to "whosoever," as we have it in Rom. 10: 13 and also in John 3: 16. Ask if they believe in Christ. If so, the promise is theirs.

In every case emphasis must be laid upon the necessity of sincere repentance of sin. True repentance always means readiness to forsake the sin. Only thus may one hope to be accepted by Christ in the sincerity of faith that turns to him as the Saviour from sin. Have them read such helpful promises as Isa. 1: 18 and Isa. 55: 7; also the encouraging passages in Luke 18: 13, 14 and Rom. 5: 6-11. Point them to "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," (John 1: 29), and to I John 1: 9, where we are told how we may be cleansed from all unrighteousness. Christ teaches that whatever the past may have been, anyone who will may come now, and in John 6: 37, he makes that all-sufficient promise, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

2. *"I cannot hold out."* Help such a one to turn away from looking at himself, insufficient in his weakness, to the living God who is able to save and keep. Our salvation does not depend on us, but on him. In the very power of God, Christ promises the

divine keeping power, in John 10: 27, 28. Note Paul's assurance in Phil. 1: 6, born of experience that Christ does keep. Peter also speaks out of a like experience in I Peter 1: 5, "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

Further emphasize the teaching that God will never forsake his believing children, as in Isa. 41: 10 and in II Cor. 12: 9, where grace sufficient is always made available for us, whatever our need. Read I Cor. 10: 13, with its special assurance of grace to keep through every temptation, also Jude 24, which magnifies God's power to keep and save. Mention well-known cases of people who were down in sin who have been saved, such as John Bunyan and others.

*PRAYER: Lord, give me to realize the sinfulness of every human heart, and to remember that since Thou hast saved me Thou canst save everyone.*

## Second Day: Excuses Born of Self-Complacency

1. *"I am satisfied with myself as I am."* People of this type need to be shaken out of their complacency. Self is unduly exalted, where no sense of need is admitted. Point to God's warnings in Jer. 13: 9, 10. Tell them frankly that they are not honest about their sins, and know it. Have them read Rom. 3: 10-12, 23, "there is none righteous, no, not one" . . . "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Recall Christ's plain words in John 3: 3, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Show them by John 3: 18-21, that they are condemned already because of their unbelief, which is of itself a fatal sin, as taught in John 16: 8, 9, and emphasized in the startling words of Heb. 10: 28-31. Point to Christ's teaching that if they are not serving God purposefully they are serving the devil (Matt. 6: 24). Show how Rom. 6: 23 teaches that their case is hopeless unless they accept Christ as their Saviour.

2. *"I am as good as most church members."* In Study VIII we referred to those who have this feeling, and suggested that it may be disarmed if we begin with a confession of the unworthiness of

ourselves, and of all other believers, who trust in a God who saves penitent sinners by his grace. Repeat this statement whenever one returns to this excuse. Remind them that when Christ said to Peter: "Follow me" (John 21: 19), Peter turned to John and said: "Lord, and what shall this man do?" To which Jesus answered: "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." No man can stand before God at the judgment, and excuse his failure to take Christ on the ground of any other person's failure. Recall Paul's statement in Rom. 14: 12, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." No man is good enough to claim salvation (Rom. 3: 23); hence only those who confess and repent of their sin have any ground to hope that they may be saved (Eph. 2: 8, 9, and I John 1: 7-9). The believer's hope rests on the divine grace wherein he stands (Rom. 5: 1-10 and Phil. 3: 7-14).

PRAYER: *Empty me of self, O God, and help me to realize my nothingness apart from thee. Then give me grace to believe in Thy redeeming love, revealed in Christ, and joyfully to turn from self to Him.*

### Third Day: Excuses Born of Indifference

1. *"I do not feel like it."* This widespread spirit of indifference is very prevalent. It is the spirit of complacency intensified. All having this spirit must be brought to see that indifference is itself a fatal sin, when it comes to ignoring the claims of Christ. Stress the fact that no man's feelings will serve him when he stands before God in the judgment. Ask them to read Rom. 2: 1-11, with its severe indictment. Have them also read Acts 17: 30, 31, where God calls on all men to repent. Hold them to the question in Heb. 2: 3, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" Press them for an answer to that question.

2. *"Not today: some other day."* Thousands yield to this common temptation: There is no hurry about it; time enough yet. This is one of the most subtle and successful of all temptations. But in II Cor. 6: 2 we learn that now is God's accepted time. No man knoweth what a day may bring forth (Prov. 27: 1). Emphasize again the teaching in Heb. 2: 3, that neglect is fatal, if persisted in.

Press the appeal in Isa. 55: 6, 7, to seek the Lord while he may be found, also that in Heb. 3: 15, "Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Call attention also to Prov. 11: 7, "When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish." Trust the Holy Spirit to do his work, using these truths as his instrument (John 16: 8-11), and to bring conviction to the indifferent.

PRAYER: *Lord forbid that I should be like Gallio, who "cared for none of these things," and help me to measure the meaning of my life so as to be determined, by thy grace, to realize as far as possible Thy plan for me.*

### Fourth Day: Excuses Born of a Critical Spirit

1. "*There are too many hypocrites in the Church.*" This is a somewhat different attitude from that of the complacent man who counts himself as good as the average church member. This spirit indicates more of antagonism to the claims of the Church. For all such the truth to stress is that the first consideration is not church membership, but Pilate's question (Matt. 27: 22), "What shall I do then with Jesus, which is called Christ?" Follow this with Christ's question in John 9: 35, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" The supreme matter is the individual's relation to Jesus Christ. Press him for an answer to these two questions.

Sometimes it is effective to say frankly that a person must be very close to a hypocrite in order to hide behind one. Paul strikes at that attitude very pointedly in Rom. 14: 10, 13. He also presses the vital fact (II Cor. 5: 10) that "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Emphasize again the teaching in Rom. 2: 1-3 that the very thing we condemn in others is in our own sinful hearts if Christ has never been given his place there. No less searching is the passage in Matt. 7: 1-5, where we are warned not to judge, lest we be judged; and first to consider the beam in our own eye, before we seek to indicate the mote in our brother's eye.

2. "*The Church is not truly Christian.*" Here we have a general accusation against the Church, which is a widespread opinion

entertained by multitudes who feel that the Church has no special interest in their welfare. In the ranks of labor many insist that an entirely new social order must come before the teachings of Christ will be realized. For most of these people, while they hiss the mention of the Church, cheer the name of Christ. They claim that Christ's teachings condemn the present economic policy maintained in the industrial world, and that most of those who are the industrial and social autocrats are in the Church and honored there, mainly because of their wealth. Moreover they point out that these industrial leaders have been complacent about the unchristian conditions, trying to do nothing to make them better, more just and humane, and that the Church has done little or nothing to preach the principles of Jesus as touching these things.

The first thing to say to this criticism is that it is largely justified by the facts. With absolute frankness we must admit the miserable failure of Christian men to apply their Christianity at this point of industrial injustice. Selfishness has been winking at the spirit of greed, while thousands of our fellowmen have been housed in dwellings utterly unfit for them to live in. It will be helpful to mention Christ's teaching that private property should be devoted to the public good, as in the two stories of rich men, in Luke 18: 19-25 and in Luke 12: 13-21. Stress the fact that while the leaders opposed Christ, "the common people heard him gladly."

Having sought thus frankly and fairly to find a common ground with these people, it should be emphasized that there are many Christian churches established in the midst of these laboring classes, revealing the spirit of Christ in their desire and effort to minister to the needs of those in the neighborhood, whether those needs be physical, mental, or spiritual. But it should especially be stressed that these churches seek always first of all to minister to the spiritual needs of these immortal souls. Then the fact must be earnestly insisted upon that the personal relation of the individual to Jesus Christ is the only solution to all these social and economic problems. Not only the economic leaders, but just as surely every class of people, must give Christ place, or the differences that exist will never be obliterated. By just so much as the Church needs changing, these factors must give expression to their loyalty to Christ and his cause by coming into the communion of the churches



and helping them to realize the Christ spirit of true brotherhood among all believers.

*PRAYER: Help me to realize, O Lord, that salvation is always an individual question before it can involve a better social order.*

### **Fifth Day: Excuses Involving Experience**

I. *Waiting for some wonderful experience.* There are some secret believers who honestly think they should not confess Christ openly by coming into the communion of the Church, because they have not had the same sort of remarkable experience that some one else had whom they have known. But the experiences that accompany conversion are by no means all alike. It is true that Paul had a sudden and wonderful and radical experience (Acts 9: 1-22). It was largely so because of Paul's position and practice previous to his coming face to face with Christ. He was hotly antagonistic to this new faith, persecuting all who confessed Christ, and consenting to the death of Stephen, one of the new Christians. Necessarily it meant a thorough change in his whole life for him to become a follower of the Christ he had hated.

In contrast we have the record of the conversion of Andrew and John, as described in John 1: 29-42. They were disciples of John the Baptist, and among those who were looking for the coming Messiah, whom John was foretelling. Hence when John pointed them to Jesus as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," they needed very little change of attitude as they turned and followed Jesus. It was ten o'clock in the morning, and they spent the rest of that day with him. Think how he led them into the light, explaining all that he told Nicodemus, about the need of the new birth and drawing them to him in a splendid allegiance. For when they left him, they immediately went out and found their brothers and brought them to Jesus.

So the experience of the jailer at Philippi (Acts 16: 23-34) was an earthquake experience in more senses than one. It also would necessarily be a radical transformation of his entire thinking and conduct. But the conversion of Lydia at the seaside (Acts 16: 12-15) was a different experience, a quiet work of grace, but none the less real. Keeping always in mind that the regenerating work

of the Holy Spirit takes place in the life of every believer, and that there is much in common in every genuine conversion; yet these differing experiences are naturally explained by antecedent conditions. To every hesitant soul, who waits for some unusual experience, urge that he only needs to accept Christ's plain invitation to come unto him, as in Matt. 11: 28, and his promise in John 6: 37, "him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." Follow this with his precious promise in Matt. 10: 32, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven."

2. *Fearful of inconsistencies.* One will also find honest believers who are conscious of their weaknesses, who hesitate to unite with the Church in the fear that their weaknesses might prove a stumbling block to some who are watching church members in order to judge of the value of the Christian life. They are all the more concerned because they know how the palpable inconsistencies of church members have hindered the cause of Christ. Most earnestly should we seek to help such hesitant souls. The answer to this attitude is given in Paul's statement in Phil. 3: 12-14, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I also am apprehended of Christ Jesus." The Revised Version properly translates it, "That I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus," namely, eternal life.

The noun of that verb "apprehend" is the word *apprentice*, and what Paul asserts in fact, and in the spirit of the entire passage, is that the Christian is an apprentice. Think what this means. An apprentice does not hesitate to begin his work for fear he may make some mistakes, or because he still has much to learn. He knows his hope is in becoming an apprentice at once, for thus he puts himself under his Master, and only as he does this has he any reason to hope that some day he may become masterful. Hence his liability to mistakes is all the more reason why he should immediately become an apprentice in the training school of Christ. The Church is such a school. It is not the end, but a means to the great end of growing in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord, and becoming more like him. Remind such of the promises in Phil. 1: 6, and in Col 3: 23, 24.

PRAYER: *Help me to remember, O Lord, that in the olden days, men who put their faith in Thee have this record, "Out of weakness they were made strong."*

### Sixth Day: Excuses Involving Conduct

I. *Unwilling to give up some things for Christ.* At first thought we might have the opinion that this is specially true of young people; but it is none the less true of many who are older. No one can ponder earnestly the alarming increase of the spirit of worldliness in the Church of Christ without realizing that until a new consecration finds place in the lives of professing Christians, God cannot use us to be his witnesses in the supreme task of winning souls to Christ. The atmosphere of the discussion of this subject is so illusive, and the temptations are so subtle, that one may well go to God in earnest prayer for divine guidance. Surely we must have in mind, as we study the subject, those lives in which God had his full right of way, such as the apostle Paul, who tells us in Acts 24: 16 how he strives "to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men." Recall the suggestions in Study II about a surrendered life and the problem of self-denial.

It costs something to be a Christian; but it costs far more not to be. The pity of it is that many are so weak in the face of the immediate satisfaction of lower desires, that they do not allow the higher values of the spirit to hold them to the higher level. The explanation of this is in the fact that they do not look beyond self, in the times of temptation, to Christ himself for guidance and strength. Read Christ's words in Mark 8: 36, 37, where he measures the relative values of the two kinds of life. The pleasures of sin and self are of short duration, as compared with the endless joys of the redeemed. Read Paul again in Phil. 3: 7-11, also Heb. 11: 24-27, where we read that Moses chose rather to suffer with his people than to be the king of the mightiest empire of his day. Consider that choice and its consequences, not only in his own life, but also in the life of the world. No one can tell what God has in store for any one of us who is willing to give God full place in his life.

Some things may not be sins, but will be "weights," as suggested in Heb. 12: 1, 2. They hinder the best progress of the Christian in

the life that seeks ever to do the will of God with heartiest loyalty, cost what it may. Some one has said that only border-line Christians ever raise these border-line questions. When Dr. Maltbie Babcock was pastor of the Brick Church, New York City, a lady sent him some tickets to the opera. He was a gifted musician and composer, and a great lover of music; yet he returned the tickets with thanks, saying he could not use them. The lady felt somewhat indignant, as if her practice of attending the opera had been condemned by her pastor. She went to see him about it. He quietly told her he did not sit in judgment on anyone else. He then told her of an operation he had witnessed at the hospital recently, where the physicians and nurses had taken every possible precaution to be thoroughly aseptic, lest by the slightest carelessness blood poisoning might endanger the life of the patient. He asked her: "Do you think they did right to be so careful?" She replied: "Most certainly! Anything less would have been criminal." Then he gently said: "My dear friend, I am a surgeon of souls. If the conduct of the operators at the hospital is right, and anything less would have been criminal, you will quickly understand how I feel about doing the least thing that might influence a weak soul who might be looking to me for an example. I have thought of everything that people say to justify themselves in doing this or that; but as for myself, I cannot run the risk. 'For their sakes I sanctify myself,' trying to do so in the spirit of my Master. That is all." She was silent a moment, then rose to go. There were tears in her eyes. She had no answer to make. She was thankful that she had that kind of a pastor. That is the highest ground. There is no possible reply to it. Would that every Christian would take only the highest ground; but alas! thousands choose lower levels.

2. *Hindered by business or social connections.* The writer has known several people who felt they could not consistently unite with the Church because of the character of their business. In some instances a family depended upon the individual who was the breadwinner. There is only one right step to be taken by all such. They must set themselves to change their business at the first possible moment, even though the change at first would involve a smaller income. The great promise to present is Phil. 4: 19, "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by

Christ Jesus." Stand out on this promise. God will not fail you. Instances could be cited to prove how great the joy has been in a home where this change was made on faith, where God had opened the way to a happier service.

Then many people hesitate to confess Christ because of the attitude of relatives or friends in the home or in business. Christ said it would be so with some (Matt. 10: 36-39). Peter also refers to it in I Pet. 4: 14. Here also there is just one right thing to do. Confess Christ at once and begin to win your relatives and friends to him. Read Mark 5: 19, with its special command to testify in your own home for him. Note also, in Matt. 12: 46-50, how Christ's own mother and brethren tried to dissuade him from his course. Suppose he had yielded to their influence and proved unfaithful to God and men! Several instances could be given to show that where hesitant Christians held back from confessing Christ because of relatives or friends, after they took the step their influence for Christ was increased manyfold and often they won those to Christ who had been the occasion of their fear and compromise.

*PRAYER: Let me not suppose, O Christ, that a true disciple of Thine can evade the cross. Help me to be absolutely true to Thee, remembering that beyond the cross is the crown.*

### **Seventh Day: Suggestions for the Class**

One church which followed the program suggested in Studies IV and V devoted several mid-week services to the study of a leaflet which the writer prepared containing these "Scripture Answers." Some one read the excuses, and others would give the answers, with the Scripture references. In every case some one was able to give the answer. It was most profitable exercise.

1. What excuses born of fear are mentioned? How would you answer the first of these? What answer may be given to the second excuse? Make a determined effort to master these answers thoroughly.

2. What excuses are born of self-complacency? What is the answer to the first? What is the answer to the second? Do not be satisfied until you have mastered every detail of these answers.

3. What excuses are born of indifference? How prevalent is



the first excuse? What is the answer? What is said about the temptation to yield to the second excuse? What Scripture passages are given in connection with this answer?

4. What excuses are born of a critical spirit? How does the first excuse differ from that of the complacent man? What are the answers given? Where do we generally hear the second excuse? What admissions must we make largely justifying it? What then must be urged upon all who make this excuse?

5. What excuses are often given involving experience? What is said about the different experiences of people who are converted? What is common to all true conversions? Contrast the experience of Paul with that of Andrew and John. State the difference between the conversion of the Philippian jailer and that of Lydia. What is the answer to the second excuse as made clear in Phil. 3: 12-14?

6. What excuses are mentioned involving conduct? What answers are given to the first excuse? What earlier Study should be reviewed at this point? Tell the story of Dr. Babcock and the opera tickets. What must be the action taken by those who hesitate because of business connections or unsympathetic relatives or friends? What Scripture is quoted at these points?

PRAYER: *May I not be of those, O Lord, of whom we read that "they all with one consent began to make excuse." May I realize how unworthy any excuse must be for not being eager to confess and serve Thee always.*

## STUDY XI

### SCRIPTURE ANSWERS TO COMMON OBJECTIONS

#### **First Day: Church Membership Is Not Necessary to Salvation**

In spite of the clear teaching of the New Testament regarding the duty of the believer to confess Christ openly, there are those who claim that they can be true Christians without doing this, and that such confession is not necessary. While no man may sit in final judgment upon another, the fact remains that when a man refuses to identify himself openly with the cause of Christ, one cannot but question the quality of his allegiance, not to say its reality. It is like a man eligible to the Army in the recent war insisting that he could be as good a soldier without enlisting as he could by going into the ranks of the Army. No man can be as loyal to Christ when maintaining a negative attitude toward him and his cause before the world, as he can when he is positive and eager to be counted his follower.

The honest student of the gospels cannot doubt that Christ expected and required this confession on the part of all who believed on him. A true friend will never ask, "Must I?" but "May I?" John 14: 23, 24 makes it clear, as Christ says: "If a man love me, he will keep my words." And his "words" are very plain, in Matt. 10: 32, 33, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." Christ cannot claim us as his before his Father, unless we are really his. The only open confession the world recognizes is church membership. We read in Acts 2: 41-47 that believers were baptized and that "the Lord added to them day by day those that were (being) saved."

In his letter to the Romans, Paul assumes, as a matter of course, that believers will "not be ashamed" to confess the Lord (Rom. 10: 8-11). When he charged his disciples to be his witnesses (Acts 1: 8), it is perfectly evident that Christ expected them to "confess him with the mouth," as Paul puts it. In fact, when Paul says: "For

with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation," one is justified in wondering whether a man who refuses to confess Christ openly does not prove that in his heart he lacks a true spirit of personal allegiance to his Lord. Let such considerations as these be urged upon all who refuse or hesitate to confess Christ by uniting with the Church. To fail here is to be an actual "slacker" in the Master's service.

PRAYER: *As I value Thy friendship and saving grace, O Master, may I always be eager to prove the fullest allegiance to Thee and Thy cause.*

## Second Day: Doubts about the Supernatural

The nature of the world proves the presence and power of a creative and controlling Intelligence far above that of man. The psalmist (Psalm 19: 1) gives expression to the appreciation of this truth: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." Lord Kelvin is conceded to be as great a scientist as any man of our time. He declared that "Science positively affirms Creative Power. . . . There is nothing between absolute scientific belief in a Creative Power and the acceptance of the theory of a fortuitous concourse of atoms. Modern scientific men are in agreement in condemning the latter as utterly absurd. . . . Forty years ago I asked Liebig, walking in the country, if he believed that the grass and flowers that we saw around us grew by mere chemical forces. He answered: 'No, no more than I could believe that a book on botany describing them could grow by mere chemical forces.' . . . Every action of free will is a miracle to physical and chemical and mathematical science. . . . If you think strongly enough, you will be forced by science to the belief in God, which is the foundation of all religion. You will find science not antagonistic but helpful to religion."

We have here a sufficient answer to the man who questions the reasonableness of believing in God as the Creator and Ruler of the universe. Paul tells us, in Rom. 1: 20, that in the light of nature itself no man is without excuse who refuses to recognize a supernatural Intelligence at work in the world. We turn now from

nature, with its proof of a Power far above that of man, to Jesus Christ, whose unique life places him also far above the life of men, in his perfection of character. He lived that life before them, when they were watching with lynx eyes to detect the least flaw in his character, and he challenged them to meet his claim that his life guaranteed the truth of his teaching. In John 8: 46, he said: "Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?" Moreover, the gospel record contains accounts of his manifesting the power of God in works of healing, restoring the dead to life, and controlling the elements of nature. These records bear on their face the evidences of genuineness. The most convincing evidence of all is the fact that Christ has been revealing through the years the power of God to save men from the slavery of sin, and make them new men in righteousness and love. These "miracles of grace" are the strongest proof that his supernatural power was also revealed in other ways.

Taking these two lines of proof in nature and in grace in human life, it may confidently be urged that to believe in the supernatural is the only intelligent position possible for an honest man, who will think far enough into the facts, as Lord Kelvin says, for science will compel him to arrive at this conclusion. We are not able to comprehend the infinite sweep of knowledge and power which stretches away beyond our finite ken; but we do have sufficient evidence of such knowledge and power to make it impossible for us to deny their existence. Moreover, science teaches that the uniformity of law and the solidarity of creation make it impossible to believe in more than one Creator and Ruler, whose laws control us on every side. We speak of him as God, because all nature reveals the fact that he is good. In this connection Study VII should be carefully reviewed.

PRAYER: *O Thou "in whom we live and move and have our being," give us to know Thee as the God of our life and our salvation.*

### Third Day: Difficulties Which Some Find in the Bible

We have noted heretofore the reasonableness of our faith in God as our Father in the heavenlies, as taught us by Jesus Christ. It

would be a simple sequence to admit the equal reasonableness of the belief that a father would tell his children what they need to know about their relations to him and to their fellowmen. This God has done in the Scriptures, which vindicate their claim to be the Word of God by the character of their teachings and by the results which follow when men accept them as the rule of faith and life. The one great story of the Scriptures is the account of God's redeeming love at work in saving men from the penalty and power of sin. This constant purpose is another proof of their genuineness. Men do not manufacture a lie in order to secure truth in the life, and then die for their faith.

In Psalm 19: 7-11, there is a striking statement of the character of "the law of the Lord," and the great value men have realized in keeping it. Paul also describes the worth of the Scriptures, in II Tim. 3: 16, 17: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Again we read in Heb. 1: 1, 2, "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake . . . unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." Well may we say with Peter (John 6: 68, 69), "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

Having indicated the reasonableness of accepting the record of the supernatural in the Scriptures, we may note two of the common difficulties, as many count them. One of these is the fact that discrepancies are found in the Scriptures. How can this fact be consistent with a divine revelation? The answer is in the way the Scriptures have been carried down through the years by human hands. We are justified in believing, in view of the facts already considered, that the original manuscripts were free from error. Their historic reliability has been tested and proved by contemporaneous history. But the point of great significance is that these discrepancies are never important, and never once are found where any fundamental teaching of Scripture is recorded. Slight changes occur, doubtless often by the hands of copyists. Some differences in figures, as to the size of armies, also occur; but some



one has fairly said they are "like specks of sandstone in a marble temple." They do not make the slightest difference at a single point in any vital teaching of the book.

A more serious difficulty for some is the difference in the moral standards found in the Old and New Testaments. Unbelievers frequently attack Old Testament standards of living as unworthy the God of righteousness and love. The first answer to this objection is that the revelation of God found in the Scriptures is a progressive revelation. Canon Mozley states the case thus: "A religion from God must be revealed progressively. If it had been at once proclaimed in its higher and purer form, men in their moral darkness and degradation could not have received it. It must come to them through their own moral atmosphere, modified by its confusion on all ethical questions. It could only be apprehended gradually. By degrees it will elevate the standard, and lift the race to a higher plane."

In the light of this clear statement, the next point to emphasize is that Christ gives men the final and perfect standard. In Mark 10: 2-5 Christ told the people regarding the Mosaic law allowing easy divorce, that it was not the final expression of the will of God, saying: "For the hardness of your heart he [Moses, through whom the law was given] wrote you this precept." Christ himself has given us the highest ground to be taken on this subject. Again Paul, in his sermon to the Athenians (Acts 17: 29, 30), touches the same thought: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." Again in Matt. 5: 43 Christ said: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy" (Deut. 23: 3-6, Lev. 19: 18, Psalm 41: 9-11). "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you."

These problems find solution as we realize the final authority of Christ. He is the point of true perspective of the whole Bible. Relate the Old Testament to his coming and work, and it all becomes luminous. Then study the New Testament in the light of his life and death, his continuing intercession and his coming again, and the revelation of God's will becomes clear in its purpose and development, as well as in its glorious consummation. Christ's special insistence upon his message is at the point where it illumi-

nates spiritual realities. Here he purposed that it should reveal its power as the eternal truth of God. Read John 3: 11-21. Christ also points to the eternal truth of the Old Testament as being that part in which these same spiritual values are involved. It is of this truth that he said (Matt. 5: 18) that "one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass . . . till all be fulfilled." Here the authority of Christ is supreme, infallible, and eternal. All that men need to make the path of duty plain for this life is given, as well as the ground for our eternal hope.

PRAYER: *Lord, help me to find Thy Word to be a lamp to my feet and a light to my path, so that I may walk in Thy statutes with a glad heart.*

#### Fourth Day: Questions about the Hereafter

We have many intimations of immortality—in nature, in the unsatisfied longings of the human soul, and in the hints of psychic research as to the activities of discarnate spirits; but none of these can furnish positive proof of the immortality of human souls. Our only ground for an intelligent faith in the future life is the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles. We have referred to Christ's trustworthiness as a teacher. Keeping this in mind, turn to John 14: 1-12, where Jesus is standing with his disciples at the moment of his departure from the earth, to "ascend up where he was before" (John 6: 62). His disciples are broken-hearted because of his statement that he is about to leave them and return to the Father. Of one thing they are certain, namely, that they can trust him absolutely to tell them the truth. He knows they are hanging on his words, in order that they may have some assurance about the future and their being with him again. Knowing that they trust him thus, he says: "In my Father's house are many mansions [abiding places]: *if it were not so, I would have told you.* I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

When we take into account all of the teachings of Christ and his apostles concerning this life and the life to come, there are three steps which mark the intelligent faith of the believer. First, we take

these teachings and test them in this earthly life. At every point where they bear upon the daily life, we find that they are true. Hence we prove Christ to be trustworthy in so far as his teachings for this life are concerned. Any man who claims to desire to realize the best possible life here, in victorious character, must take Christ for the Lord of his earthly life, whether or not he look beyond the grave. He cannot escape this obligation if sincere in his profession to desire the best method for the earthly life.

Moreover, Christ has taught us that this life does not end at the grave, and that we are not the children of the dust, but of the King immortal and eternal. He has taught us to build character as unto God, making thereby the unerasable lines of an immortal existence, rather than seeking reputation at the hands of men. He has told us that if we will do this, we can realize here the blessings that will come from this sort of living. Read his teaching about the way of the blessed life in Matt. 5: 1-12; also his assurance in John 14: 20, 21, where the heavenly blessings continue with the earthly communion with the Lord. His apostles again and again unfold the same truth, simply elaborating Christ's teachings. Once more we are able to test the word of Christ, for we find as we take his statement as a working hypothesis, and live as if it were so, we prove the power of his truth, quickening every incentive to love God and our fellowmen, according to his will. You may divide the race into two classes, one living as if it were not so, forgetting God and godliness, as if there were nothing beyond the dust of the grave; the other class living as if it were so, looking Godward in all life, and seeking to do his will in every opportunity to serve while in the flesh. No man could study these two groups of people for one hour, and ever have any doubt as to where the truth is to be found, with its supreme values. Hence again we prove Christ to be true and trustworthy.

Once more our Lord teaches us that, beyond our power to test, there is an abiding place in the presence of God and the glories of the redeemed. What now shall we say to this teaching, which points us beyond the reach of human ken? There can be but one reasonable position to take. We have proved him true and trustworthy concerning his teachings for this life. We have tested his teachings regarding the blessed results realized even here when

we live along the lines of his revelation concerning the ongoing of our souls as children of God, and we seek to do God's will here day by day. In this second testing we have also proved him true and trustworthy. Hence we must trust him when he tells us of that which goes beyond our power to know. Reason, logic, faith, hope, love, all resting on actual experience, compel us to say with Paul (II Tim. 1: 12), "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Paul had not the slightest doubt about it, and when the time of his departure was at hand (Phil. 1: 23, 24), he was quite certain that "to depart and be with Christ" was "far better" than "to abide in the flesh." This is the reasonableness of the Christian's faith in the future life.

PRAYER: *Grant, O Lord, that I may be of those of whom Thou dost say: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory."*

### **Fifth Day: "I Cannot Believe What I Cannot Understand"**

The agnostic attitude is more prevalent today than it has been for nearly a century. There are many people who have never given time to think their way to an intelligent position in connection with the teachings of religion and the claims of Christ. In many modern institutions of learning, where they would study various sciences, they would receive no help whatever in this higher realm of character building. In fact very often the subject of religion is dismissed as outside the realm of practical daily life, and as being beyond the pale of realities, dealing largely with matters of uncertain faith and "other-worldliness." Hence a very common objection given by many to considering the claims of religion is that they cannot believe what they do not understand.

But the simple fact is that this statement is not true. We are believing in hundreds of things that we do not understand. The emphasis made in the first day of Study IX is applicable here. We all accept the fact of electricity but no man understands it. The human mind is finite and every living soul is supplementing his knowledge every day with a very active and natural faith. Christ called the attention of Nicodemus to the fact (John 3: 7-13) that

he believed in the wind, though he did not know whence it came or whither it went. We may apprehend a fact with certainty without comprehending its mystery or without testing our faith thoroughly in the fact or the individual. The vast majority of business is done on paper, all of which is a matter of faith. We ask for "credentials," which indicate how much faith some one else has in a person, and because of our faith in the person who gives the credentials we put our faith in the one in whom he believes.

The indictment against agnosticism is that men fall back upon it in matters of religion, but do not allow it to interfere with their business or pleasure in the same way. They go right along utilizing many facts, like electricity, without understanding them, and believing in people whom they do not know and about whose character they are not well informed. This they consider the practical thing to do, and in the main it is. They must be challenged to face the claims of the Christian religion on the ground that its value to the human race cannot be ignored by any honest student of history. As Paul said to Festus (Acts 26: 26), "this thing was not done in a corner." To refuse to give full and fair consideration to the benefits which have come to mankind through the Christian religion, betokens a willingness to be intellectually dishonest with one's own soul and with the truth. In dealing with such, it will often be necessary to say some very direct things along this line of thought. Most people do not want others to think them intellectually dishonest, even if they know themselves to be so. This accusation has often led some such to be dissatisfied with themselves, and that was the beginning of honest inquiry into the truth.

Every agnostic can understand this one thing, that Christianity has proved to be the best religion known to men. Notwithstanding all those failures that have marked the peoples who have called themselves Christians, the fact remains that it has brought greater blessings to men than any other religion, and that its greatest blessings are those priceless values which make for character-building on the high level of moral and spiritual worth, where all the hope of the race is centered. The difficulty in the way of the progress of Christianity has been, not with the teachings of Christ, but with the unwillingness of men to give them place. Wherever his teachings have been accepted and practiced they have proved sufficient



to solve every problem of the individual, the community, and the nation. Here are undeniable facts, which the agnostic must recognize or confess himself dishonest.

Another exceedingly important fact is that many people suppose the intellect to be the only organ of evidence to the soul, and consequently decide their attitude toward Christianity on the ground that they are not able intellectually to solve all of its problems. But the affections are also an organ of evidence to the soul, especially in the realm of personal relationships. I know that my mother loves me; but I cannot prove it by an intellectual process. Not only so, but the will is also an organ of evidence, especially in the realm of personal relationships, as Christ clearly teaches in John 7: 17: "If any man willeth (is willing) to do his will he shall know of the teaching whether it is of God." All this is of vital importance, as it involves the necessity of relating your will to that of the living God, in an attitude of submission to his will. In the nature of things, this can be the only right relation of a creature to his Creator, and of a follower to his Lord. Every one who has tried it, testifies to its blessings.

*PRAYER: Help us to realize, O God, that though we may evade the truth for awhile, one day we must face it in Thy presence, when no subterfuge will avail us.*

### **Sixth Day: How to Discover Ostensible Objections**

The foregoing considerations suggest the fact that very often people profess to have objections of an intellectual character which justify them in turning away from Jesus Christ, when in fact their difficulty is not intellectual, but moral. A pastor in an eastern city was interviewing a man who presented what he claimed to be his intellectual difficulties. After much discussion, he admitted that his objections had been fairly answered. Yet he returned to some of them again, traveling in a circle. Then the minister asked this question: "Suppose all of your intellectual difficulties were answered to your perfect satisfaction, would you then be willing to take Jesus Christ as your Lord and Master, to live your daily life exactly as you know he would want you to live it?" Without much hesitation, he replied: "Well, doctor, I am afraid I would not."

Then the minister called his attention to the fact that his difficulty was not really intellectual, but moral, and that it must be decided in the realm of his will. He called his attention to the words of Christ, in John 13: 17: "*If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.*"

The man who is perfectly honest with Jesus Christ will not evade his plain responsibility to be true to his highest and best by raising excuses or objections which are not real and sincere. He knows that the first thing for an honest man to do is to face his sin, especially the sin of self-will, with an honest confession of his need of help beyond himself. He also knows of friends who have proved Jesus Christ to be able to help all who turn to him for help. He knows that the first assent of faith in Christ must be coupled with a sincere penitence because of his sin, and a turning to Christ because of his promise to forgive our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Questions outside of this first range of plain steps to be taken need not to be settled before these first steps are taken. In fact, when they are taken, the new life begins to bear its blessed fruit, and ostensible objections melt away. There will be more to know from day to day, but we may all say with the prophet Hosea (6: 3), "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord."

In keeping with this emphasis is the fact that most Protestant communions require a very simple condition for membership. When one accepts the great fundamentals of faith in Christ, which we have already noted, he will be welcomed into the communion of these churches. Many elements which make up the fulness of the Scripture teachings will come later; and are to be studied in the realm of individual liberty of opinion, when there is honest difference between evangelical Christians. Put first things first, and let these have a secondary place. First of all, "Taste and see that the Lord is good." Recall how simple was the faith of the Ethiopian (Acts 8: 36, 37), "What doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

It is therefore wise to discover early in the conversation just how far the individual is willing to make a beginning in the way of

taking Christ as his Saviour. Emphasize this line of thought as a help to decide him to go as far as he does realize his duty, allowing ostensible difficulties to wait. This will quickly discover what his real attitude is, and it will often be a discovery to himself as well. Such realization will always clear the atmosphere and help one to see the next step to take.

*PRAYER: Help me, O Lord, to seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, assured that all other things shall be added that are for my welfare.*

### Seventh Day: Suggestions for the Class

Intellectual pride always betokens intellectual weakness. The sign of intellectual strength is the spirit of humility in the face of so much that baffles all human science and human philosophy. To be teachable in the presence of the greatest Teacher of men is the only worthy spirit.

1. When one claiming to believe in Christ refuses to confess his faith, what must we infer about him? What Scripture shows that Christ asks us to confess him before men? What does Paul say about this in Rom. 10: 8-11?

2. What is the statement by Lord Kelvin about believing in a Creator? What did Liebig say on the same subject? Why is Christ's character an assurance of the truth of his statements? What do "miracles of grace" justify us in believing about other manifestations of God's power? What does science teach about one God? What Study should be reviewed in this connection?

3. What is the final proof of the genuineness of the Scriptures? What is the great story of the Bible? What Scripture is quoted to show its value? What is said of the original manuscripts? How are discrepancies explained? How are the different moral standards of the Bible explained? In what way does Christ claim final authority in religion?

4. Have we any positive proof of the immortality of the soul? What justifies our faith in such a future? What point is emphasized in connection with Christ's testimony to his disciples? Give the three steps which justify the Christian's faith in Christ's revelation about the future life.

5. How prevalent is the agnostic position today? How do men deal with things we do not understand in all other realms of life? What is the challenge of Christian history? What is said about the intellectual honesty of agnostics? What are the organs of evidence to the soul?

6. Tell the story of the pastor and the man who discovered that his difficulty was not intellectual, but moral. When should we seek to learn just how far the objector will go in deciding to do what is a clear duty? What are the first simple steps to take? What is said about the simple condition of church membership in most communions?

PRAYER: *Help me, O Christ, to be ready to live up to such light as I have, and to be assured that by so doing I shall be led into more light.*

## STUDY XII

### STRENGTHENING WEAK CHRISTIANS

#### First Day: The Vital Importance of This Service

One of the most pathetic statements in the New Testament is the declaration of Paul to the Corinthians (I Cor. 3: 1-3) that they were still "babes in Christ," in that they had made so little progress in the Christian life since they accepted Jesus as their Saviour. We have heard Christians testify that on looking back ten years they were not conscious of having made any progress in their religious experience. In all humility, realizing how much yet remains for us in Christ, we must confess that such a statement indicates a real failure on the part of such, for it indicates, first of all, actual indifference about making progress in the possibilities of Christian growth. No one could be anxious to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord, and go through ten years without having many precious and increasing blessings.

In too many cases there is a feeling that when once a person has made a public confession of faith in Christ and been received into the membership of the Church, we may rest satisfied. But the Christian life should be just beginning its experience of growth and fruitfulness with this enlistment. Were the soldier to imagine that he has nothing more to do after having been recruited, there would be no victories for him. We have our Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, and we have young people's organizations in our churches; but the fact remains that we have not done enough to plan definitely for the training of those who have united with the Church and are just beginning the Christian life. This applies especially to young people. It is conceded that the average Sunday school of today is falling short of the program that is needed in effective Christian nurture.

The logic of all that has been said thus far about the failure of the Church generally to train its members to be efficient in winning others to Christ, applies immediately at this point. For some three decades there have been increasing numbers of "conferences



for the deepening of the spiritual life," beginning with Northfield, where Mr. Moody gathered a group of college students to consider the call of Christ for young people to consecrate their lives to his service. Many of the outstanding leaders in Christian service in this country trace their decision to those early Northfield days, and thousands testify to the priceless blessings received there, and elsewhere.

In more recent years conferences for young people have been conducted by the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations for college students and members of their city Associations. These have been supplemented by many conferences for mission study courses, and various Sunday school training courses, all proving how great has been the need, and also how great have been the benefits derived from them. For even in a ten days' gathering of this sort thousands of young people, and older as well, have been led to realize the spiritual barrenness of their lives, and have been quickened to a definite consecration to Christian service. Prayer penetrates the atmosphere of these conferences, with their Bible classes and special studies of missionary and other themes, all tending to a more thorough preparation of willing workers for a positive influence upon the home church or Association, when they return. Instantly it is recognized in their churches that they have received a special blessing, and at once plans are made to send others the next year.

But why should such special conferences be needed? The answer is inevitable—because the spiritual atmosphere of these special conferences is not found in the life of the average church. It lacks this warmth of eager desire to be more efficient, this spirit of consecration, this new readiness to deny self and put Christ first, for the new vision has caught a new estimate of things that make life worth while. Who shall say that the Church shall be complacent in the face of the need of developing just this atmosphere? What a gigantic task confronts us here! No man can do it; but God can do it, and will do it in every church that waits on him for the grace to have him cleanse out everything that might hinder his Holy Spirit in accomplishing this blessed result. How tragic is the sense of helplessness that we feel at the mere mention of such a program! We realize what a tremendous lethargy of indifference

must be overcome. But nothing less is necessary if the Church shall rise to meet its challenge today. God will prove equal to the task, if we give him his chance.

*PRAYER: Revive Thy work, O Lord, in my church, and begin in me. Cleanse out of my life everything that might hinder Thee from having full right of way there.*

## **Second Day: The Big Brother Spirit at Work**

Some years ago the so-called Big Brother Movement was started in an eastern city. The plan was to have a Christian with some experience take a special interest in one just beginning the Christian life, or one who had not yet known Christ, and, by an immediate frequent contact, help such a one to become a Christian or to become a stronger follower of the Master. This fellowship had Christ at the heart of it. Wherever the plan was practiced, a notable result was the reflex blessing always received by the Christian, as marked as the help received by the younger friend. The original plan was devised for men and boys, but the principle is applicable everywhere.

The first Sunday after Theodore Roosevelt entered Harvard, he went to the nearest evangelical Sunday school and asked if there were a class of boys needing a teacher. The class was waiting for him. During his four years at college he taught that class. One can imagine how great was the help received by the boys, not simply in the class, but in the interest taken by the teacher in each boy. And Roosevelt has testified that his Sunday school class was his anchor in the midst of college temptations common to every student. There is great need of this big brother spirit on the part of Sunday school teachers, involving more than the teaching of the lesson. It includes the plan to touch personally through the week the boys and girls in the class, revealing the love of Christ in a vital way.

The adoption of this method in every church and Association would result in untold blessings. When the class has already adopted the plan suggested in Study V, with its prayer covenant and special concern for all who are not professing Christians, the teacher has an immense advantage in the plan itself, and can enter

into the lives of the Christian members of the class, helping them to cultivate the prayer life and the Bible study involved in the regular work of the class. In such classes the teacher could at once secure a big brother relation between the professing Christians in the class and those who are not. Doing this would help very markedly in winning such to Christ and the Church. Moreover, whenever it became evident that a member of the class indicated special interest in the deeper things of the spiritual life, the teacher would then be instant in the effort to do whatever definite thing would meet such a desire. Of course all this assumes a teacher who is himself far enough along in the experience of fellowship with Christ to meet all these situations which would challenge his leadership.

In Acts 18: 24—19: 7, we have an illustration of this kind of special help and the great value of it. At Ephesus we find a young man, Apollos by name, who was "an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures"; but who betrayed the fact that he was not fully equipped for his work, for he knew "only the baptism of John." Two earnest Christians, Aquila and his wife Priscilla, "took him unto them and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly." They probably had no such natural gifts as Apollos, but they knew the full Gospel better than he, and by helping him extended their own influence into many lives. Today there are some with evident ability in public speech who do not know the Holy Spirit, and have never received his power. The gifts of men are not to be despised, but rather cultivated; yet without the accompanying gift of God's Spirit, they will not avail to help others to "know the way of God more perfectly."

We have here a principle which may be most helpfully applied in every church as a follow-up plan, and which will be as helpful to the church member as to the one whom he seeks to draw into the fellowship of its worship and service. Divide the membership into six parts, the older men and women, the younger men and women, and the older boys and girls. Whenever a newcomer appears in the church at any service, one should be chosen from the corresponding group and assigned to him, or her, to cultivate all the personal attentions and relationships that will result in drawing the newcomer into the life of the church. The church member should be chosen with a view to neighborhood convenience when

possible. It may mean calling at the home of the new friend, either to come with him to a service, or to cultivate acquaintance. It will mean devoting one's time faithfully to the task of helping to assimilate thoroughly the newcomer with the life of the church. Then let the newly established member be appointed to the same service in connection with another still more recent attendant. No better or more efficient follow-up plan has been known to the writer. Try it.

PRAYER: *Give me Thy shepherd-love, O Christ, so that I shall not hesitate to be a friend to one who is lonely and hungry for Christian fellowship.*

### **Third Day: Arranging Interviews with Strong Christians**

Within recent years certain Young Men's Christian Associations conceived the idea of arranging to have experienced Christians meet young men who would be glad to talk over their problems and needs with such sympathetic advisers. The Secretary asked men of standing and reputation to give one evening a month to such interviews. Several responded. In some instances it was the first time these men had been offered something definite in the way of personal Christian service. They saw in this plan an opportunity for real and lasting usefulness. Announcement was made that "Judge ——" would be glad to talk with any of the young men who might care to discuss their problems with him on a certain evening. Several young men were listed and the interviews began. Sometimes the interviewer would be a prominent business man, or one well known in the community as commanding the respect of all.

Of course it was the ultimate aim in all these interviews to help the persons interviewed to find Jesus Christ, or to come into closer personal relationships with him. As a result not only were many young men greatly blessed, but those who agreed to conduct the interviews testified to the reflex blessings they received. Anyone who has spent hours at student conferences in such interviews knows that quickening results always prove helpful to the leaders as they try to help others. One notable case in a city of the middle west should be mentioned. He was a very busy man and agreed to one evening each month with hesitation. In a few weeks

he asked to be scheduled twice a month. Later he asked to be announced as coming once a week. Only an absolutely imperative engagement ever takes him away from that night at the Association, where he is quite clearly convinced that his devotion of that set time, in sympathy and prayer, to helping dozens of younger men, is the best possible investment he can make once a week. The dividends which return no man can estimate in their priceless values, for they are built into immortal lives.

It is rather remarkable that this method of Christian service has not been more widely practiced. It could be embodied in the program of any live church, and be practiced by both men and women. Often the interviews might be at the home of the leader, especially when an invitation to a home might mean much to a lonely young man or woman. Or they might be on a given night at the church, when a social time would be conducted for all newcomers, and then they would divide up into different places for the interviews. It is a character of Christian service that would appeal to some men and women who are not so responsive to other forms of service. Some one energetic person in each church should have charge of making these appointments, having both lists well in hand, and assigning two people to an interview in the light of what he knows of both.

The student of Scripture quickly recalls how many personal interviews are recorded therein between the Lord and single individuals, and of how great importance these interviews proved to be. It is true in both Old and New Testaments, and interesting and instructive to note how different the circumstances were in different cases, and how the differing needs were met. Note the case of Abraham in Gen. 12: 1-3; of Moses in Exodus 3: 1-12; of Isaiah in Isa. 6: 1-8; of Job in Job 38-42; of Elijah in I Kings 19: 8-18. Note Christ's interviews with Andrew and John, John 1: 35-42; with Nicodemus, John 3; with the woman of Samaria, John 4: 6-29; with the woman taken in adultery, John 8: 3-11; and with the rich young ruler, Luke 18: 18-23.

*PRAYER: Lord, help me to appreciate the importance of an audience of one, by realizing that the result of one conversation may be the determining of the destiny of an immortal soul.*



#### Fourth Day: Reclaiming Backsliders

When mention is made of backsliders, we generally think of those whose lives are marked by practices involving not simply neglect of Christian duty, but overt sin. But we have already mentioned others who must be counted as being all too complacent in their habits of life, though they neglect the study of God's Word and the habit of prayer and public worship, because they do not break the ordinary conventions of social and business ethics. Many of these were once active in the service of Christ who are so no longer. We have heard professing Christians relate how active they once were, intending this as an evidence that they have done their part, and should henceforth be excused from active service. But the fact is that their statement proves them to be "slackers," if some stronger word should not be used. Is this too strong a statement? Not when applied to those who are still vigorous in health, if Christianity is ever to win in the world. There is a statement in Eccl. 8: 8, which should be written in letters of fire on the walls of every Christian life: "There is no discharge in that war."

He who becomes weary in well-doing, disobeying the command in Gal. 6: 9, is uncovering a dangerously vulnerable point in his armor, and an arrow from the devil's quiver will soon find it. Paul's appeal may well be pondered in earnest prayer, as he urges us in Eph. 6: 10-18, to "put on the whole armor of God . . . and having done all to stand." *The best way to reclaim backsliders is to prevent them*, and also to seek, with quick and unhesitating determination, to *help them at the first sign of their slipping away*. The constant inspiration for the Christian in this service is found in Gal. 6: 1-10, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Use also I John 1: 6-10 in dealing with them. Usually the same considerations which are emphasized in winning people to Christ may be used with increasing appropriateness to those who have not been faithful.

A special handbook to use in this form of service is the epistle to the Hebrews. It was written to help weak Christians of the early Church, many of whom were going back because of the hardships involved in being faithful. As intimated in Heb. 2: 1, R. V.,

some of them were drifting away. The writer sought to strengthen their faith in Christ by picturing what he had done for them and for the salvation of the world, also by picturing him as now interceding for us at the mediatorial throne of God. He sought to show how through the Old Testament times those whose lives had made a real contribution to the welfare of Israel and the race had been true to their faith in Christ, as the coming Messiah, though that meant sufferings and even death. The special appeal is then found in the first part of the twelfth chapter, followed by many practical suggestions about how to hold steadfast as true Christians to the end. Get the spirit of this epistle, and God will bless its use as you seek to press home the thought therein upon the hearts and consciences of those in our day who are in danger of not entering in through their unbelief, betrayed in their unfaithfulness.

PRAYER: *O Thou, whose mercy endureth forever, give me a redeeming love for men. May I remember that I am debtor to every man for whom Christ died, and be eager to seek to restore any who may have stumbled.*

### **Fifth Day: "Out of Weakness They Were Made Strong"**

This inspiring statement, recorded in Heb. 11: 34, is made concerning those heroes of the faith who had wrought valiantly by the grace of God, even though some of them—like Moses and David, who might be classed with Peter and with most of us—had stumbled all the way along. As we have noted, this epistle was seeking to strengthen weak Christians, who were slipping back to the old life out of Christ, or were considering the temptations to do so, hoping to keep them from falling away, or to encourage them to return to their former allegiance to Christ. Though weak and imperfect, God had not failed them; but had strengthened their faith and renewed their wills, until they came through trials and failures unto victory. It was not a perfect victory, yet a very real and blessed one. The same message is applicable to all of us in our day who are yielding to the spirit of the "slacker," and easily compromising with our clear conviction of all that loyal Christians should seek to be.

The main point to press home to all such is the truth that God

is able and anxious to give them strength to be true. As a rule their state of mind will be one of discouragement because they have been so weak, if indeed they are susceptible at all to the appeal to be more faithful. For such there is a picture of what God is doing today, and every day, in the lives of those who had gone down to the depths. This picture is calculated to be as helpful to weak Christians as to those who are down and out in sin. Some of us have attended rescue missions, where a speaker from the realm of well-to-do Christians would speak, and receive polite attention, though most of his audience would think all the time he was speaking that he did not understand them.

Then one would rise who was known to have been one of the worst men in the city two or three years before. Now he was an utterly changed man, in every respect, outward appearance as well as inward life. He told how he had wandered into the place to get a cup of coffee, and had heard a man who had a record like his own tell of the way Christ had changed his life. He had not supposed there was any power anywhere that could do such a thing, but there was his former acquaintance a living witness to the actual result. He himself had decided to try this Jesus and see if there was anything to it. Christ had met him and saved him. Moreover, it had been some three years since, so that he had proved not only Christ's power to save but also his power to keep. You have seen that audience of men sit up and bend forward with hungry looks in their eyes. Here was something concrete. They had known this man when he was one of the worst of their number. If God could do so much for him, there must be something in this claim that there is hope for them, and that the same loving Father will welcome them back to his love and help them to be faithful in a new life.

"Out of weakness they were made strong." So may we be today by the grace of this same God who is mighty to save and to restore his wayward children. One further thought should be mentioned here. It is the fact that some Christians are less ready to try to bring back one who has lost interest and grown indifferent, or gone off in sin, than they are to try to win others to Christ who never made a profession. Yet this work also is clearly a part of our program, as we noted in yesterday's lesson. Once more let it

be urged that special prayer should be cultivated in preparation for an approach to such an indifferent church member. Count on God to do what he only can do.

*PRAYER: Kindle in us, O Lord, the prayerful purpose to be of the righteous who will grow stronger and stronger, and help us to be ready to be used of Thee in helping to restore any who have stumbled.*

### **Sixth Day: "Seventy Times Seven"**

This comfort-filled, hope-giving utterance of our blessed Lord is presented here as applying to all Christian service as we deal with our fellowmen, whether Christians or not. We are likely to be less patient and less forgiving with professing Christians when they grow cold, than with those who are not yet in the Church; but the message of Christ should be kept in mind as applicable to all. Read the whole passage in Matt. 18: 21-35 where these words appear. In the light of the full story, we rather pity Peter when he suggests seven times as a reasonable limit in the matter of forgiving people. But did you ever try to forgive anyone seven times, one after the other, for the same offense exasperatingly repeated? Visualize the situation, and most of us will agree that Peter had gone beyond us in his spirit of forgiveness. Hence how startling are those words of the Master, "I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven."

We are reminded of Paul's words in I Cor. 13: 8, "Love never faileth." It is a hard lesson for most of us to learn. But it is of priceless value, not simply because it will mean that people will be saved who would otherwise be lost, but also because of the discipline it develops unto victory in the life of the Christian himself. Think of the picture which Christ here gives us of the forgiving love of God! "His mercy endureth forever." Brought down to our individual cases, it means that he continues to forgive us day after day, with an amazing infinite patience and forbearing love. If we would seek to realize the significance of the infinite love of God, it can best be done as we try to appreciate what his love does for us in this constantly repeated forgiveness, day after day, week after week, year after year, unto the end! And all this though we are so

pitifully unworthy, so unappreciative, so careless, so selfish, so disobedient at times. In spite of it all, he loves us with an unflinching love.

No power on earth carries in it so surely the redeeming love of God as the spirit of the Christian who has caught this love and lives it out day by day in his contact with other people. Some years ago a pastor received word that a man who was a member of his church, and who was addicted to drink, had just come home after the worst experience he had ever had. He hastened to the home, where the wife said she scarcely knew what to do, as her father had declared the man should never again enter his house and that the daughter must leave her husband and return to the father. The husband refused to see his pastor; but going to the door of the bedroom the pastor sought to assure him of his friendship and desire to be of help. With his head under the covers, he remained silent. For a full half hour the pastor sat by his bedside, repeating his desire to help and urging that God was able to give him the victory over his weakness.

Finally he looked out from under the covers, saying: "Do you mean it?" Reassured as to this, he reached out his hand, saying: "Then I will make one more attempt." For two hours they talked and prayed together. The wife was called in and told of his new purpose, and advised to stay with him, which she agreed to do. The pastor secured a promise from the man that the next time he felt the first suggestions of the return of the old craving for drink, he would come immediately to the manse. A few weeks later, when callers were at the manse, the bell rang. The pastor went to the door to find his friend hesitantly saying: "You told me to come to you; but you are busy." Excusing himself from the callers, the pastor took his friend to the study, where they talked on and on, praying more than once, that the desire should be taken away. Finally the man arose, with a tone of confidence in his voice, saying: "I am going straight home to the wife." It was agreed that he would come again, if the desire ever returned.

Weeks passed. The man had never missed the regular church services from the day of the first call, as this had been urged as a means of grace. One day the pastor met the wife wheeling the baby. "How are matters going?" he asked. Her face was radiant



as she said: "Oh, it is glorious! You should see him these days. He says he is sure the taste will never return again. We have a family altar now, which we never had before." The years have passed, but never again has the old temptation had any power in his life. He is strong in the faith as to God's keeping power. He declares that it is all due to the fact that one friend proved true to him, when all others had forsaken him in his time of direst need. That friend was only used of God, as his Holy Spirit touched the opening heart of the penitent man; yet humanly speaking, unless Christ had had a witness just there and then, the story would have been different. Who could measure the gratitude of that pastor to God for giving him the chance thus to serve? Great is the joy which is part of the blessed reward of such Christ-like service.

PRAYER: *Help me to hear Thee saying, O Lord of divine patience, that I must never, never, NEVER let go.*

### Seventh Day: Suggestions for the Class

These possibilities in Christian nurture and upbuilding are so great as to excite the imagination, as we think how our blessed Lord is busy all the time doing these things. Think of what would become of us, if it were not so! John tells us (John 13: 1), "Having loved his own . . . he loved them unto the end."

1. What progress has the average church member made in the Christian life? How is this lack of growth explained? What do the blessings received at special conferences prove regarding the local church? What should every church strive to do in the light of these revelations?

2. What is the "Big Brother" movement? What did Roosevelt do while in college? What was done for Apollos, and by whom? What follow-up plan for every church is suggested? Give a full statement.

3. What interview plan is suggested? Tell of the man who asked for more interviews, and why? How may this plan be practiced in the church, and by whom? Give some references to Scripture records of personal interviews.

4. Who are to be included under the term "backsliders"? What

is the best way to reclaim them? What is the main purpose of the epistle to the Hebrews? What is the special appeal in the twelfth chapter?

5. About whom were the words used which head the Fifth Day study? What is the best way to encourage the weak? Illustrate by repeating the story of the result of personal testimony as to God's power to save and keep. What should be true of Christians in the matter of readiness to do this work?

6. Where do we find our Lord speaking of "Seventy times seven"? What is said of Peter's forgiving spirit? What phrase in I Cor. 13 is suggested here? What thought helps most to realize the infinite love of God? Tell the story of the man whose pastor helped him, when he was discouraged by his slavery to the drink habit. Point out the items in the pastor's method that you think were most helpful to the man.

PRAYER: *Lord, apart from Thee, I shall surely fail in this most important duty. Help me therefore to rely upon Thee constantly, and to attempt the task courageously, whenever Thou callest me to do it.*

## STUDY XIII

### CHRIST'S CALL TO A LIFE WORK

#### First Day: Enlisting for Life

In his letter to Timothy, the apostle Paul wrote (I Tim. 6: 12) "Fight the good fight of faith, *lay hold on eternal life*, whereunto thou art also called." He also begins his second letter to Timothy with these significant words, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, *according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus.*" Turn to John 5: 24, and read the declaration of our Lord, which is one of the great foundation texts of the New Testament, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, *hath everlasting life*, and shall not come into condemnation; but *is passed from death unto life.*" Paul illuminates these truths in Rom. 8: 2, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Also in Rom. 6: 23, "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

In our war experiences, or when we have standing armies to preserve order, men enlist for a period of years, at the end of which their obligation ceases. In our recent war they enlisted "for the duration of the war," but expecting it to last only a few years at most. These facts give significance to Paul's appeal for the loyal spirit of a good soldier on the part of every Christian. We have already noted that our redemption involves Christ's absolute right to all that we have and are. Therefore to the true Christian it never occurs that enlistment is for any part of his earthly life, for he belongs to Christ for time and eternity. Our only thought must be going all the way with our Lord in the way that he commands.

We are told that when Julius Cæsar planned the conquest of Great Britain, he took his soldiers to the shores of the islands, and then ordered some picked men in small boats to take burning torches and set fire to every trireme in the fleet. As the Roman soldiers saw their ships burn down to the edge of the sea and disap-

pear, they knew they could never return to Rome unless they conquered the people of those new lands. And as the British from the hilltops watched this amazing spectacle, they understood why Cæsar was the conqueror of the world. It is just such a final absolute decision on our part to give ourselves to our Saviour once for all, and for everything that we are worth, that should mark our lives. If once we have caught the vision of the priceless value of Christ's redeeming work in our behalf, and of our obligation to share that blessing with every other soul for whom he died, it will help us to make that unconditioned consecration.

Hence every follower who has enlisted under the banner of the Captain of our salvation should seriously ask himself at the threshold of the Christian life—What may I do for Christ with my life so that he may use me to the limit in extending his cause throughout the earth? The challenge to do this is involved in the very principle of our allegiance to him. It especially applies to young people who have their life-work ahead of them. They should be making their choice early in the days of preparation, so that they may shape their course of study and daily Christian service with a view to the permanent service they are to render. It is hoped that the considerations which follow in this Study may prove helpful toward such decisions.

PRAYER: *"Consecrate me now to Thy service, Lord,  
By the power of grace divine."*

## Second Day: Success or Failure?

It has been said that we have a way of calling anything a success or a failure according as it realizes what the form of its construction shows its maker intended it to be or to do. For example, an umbrella shows from the form of its construction that its maker intended it to keep off the rain. We might use it for a walking stick, or for some other purpose; but unless it will keep off the rain, it is a failure as an umbrella. So a knife shows by its form of construction that its maker intended it to cut. It is sometimes used to hold up a window a few inches, or for other purposes, but unless it will cut, it is a failure as a knife. Moreover, if we had several machines with many features in common, but each had a

special feature, as a rake, or a cutting blade, we would immediately say it was the purpose of the maker of each machine that it should be used in connection with its distinctive feature.

Keeping these thoughts in mind, let us think of man as having many features in common with other forms of animal life, but having a distinctive endowment in the realm of the spirit, a moral quality which makes character possible, so that a man is lifted above every other creature into a class by himself, not simply a creature indeed, but akin to God in the nature of his moral and spiritual being. The logic of our thought compels us instantly to say it is perfectly evident, from the very form of man's construction, that his Maker intended him to realize the particular development of his life in this high realm of his special endowment, where the supreme business of his life shall be to realize the will of God. There is no possible escape from this conclusion. Therefore, whatever else a man may be or do during his earthly life, though he might amass enough gold to fill his grave, though he might shine with all the intellectual brilliance of Shakespeare, unless he shall realize the will of God for his life in seeking to be faithful in the high realm of spiritual values in a victorious manhood, we must write across the record of all other achievements—*But, he is a failure as an immortal soul.*

It is not enough for us to be saved, if the will of God is to be accomplished in the earth. We have a striking illustration of the degrees of success that mark the life of a Christian, in I Cor. 3: 11-23. Paul intimates that some nominal Christians will prove by their lives that they are not really Christ's at all. These are "destroyed." But there are Christians who have turned to God and have been regenerated by Christ and lifted into the divine sonship, who never get very far in loyal service. They are building on Christ, the only foundation; but they are building "wood, hay, stubble," and these will be tried as by fire. It would seem that they can only besmirch the foundation. Others will build "gold, silver, precious stones," and they will be in the class to whom Christ referred when he said in John 15: 8: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." Let us pause here and earnestly ask ourselves—What is the real character of my building? How far is it glorifying God?



PRAYER: *"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."*

### **Third Day: Measures of Manhood**

The most vital and positive thing in human living is to have Jesus Christ a vivid reality in the daily thinking of the individual. Our appreciation of the unattained is the measure of our ideal. Moreover, our conviction as to what is attainable is a definite inspiration to everyone who realizes that our Lord's promise of available grace and power justifies all our hopes of being lifted into his life and his victory. It is because Jesus Christ realizes to men the motive and the power for such an attainment that he is proving to be the Saviour of the world. We find in him reality and the invitation to share it. He himself is the perfect standard offered to us. Paul states the fact in Eph. 4: 13, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." The vision is ever the prerequisite to the realization of any ideal. There it shines for us in "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

But when we look around us and see what so many people are seeking as the objective of their lives, it is difficult to believe that they ever had a vision of God's high thought for us all—they are striving after ends so utterly unworthy of their possibilities and powers, revealing perverted tastes and misguided judgments. Their measures of manhood are so pitifully inadequate. Let us note some of these. Some men measure manhood by millinery. It seems too superficial to mention, but some people pay more attention to their clothes than to their immortal souls. Some men measure manhood by muscle. To them life is found in the realm of the physical and the earthly. They see only the animal side of human relationships. High endowments of intellect and heart are subsidized to satisfy their desires on the level of the flesh. There is a proper place for the cultivation of physical health. Build a strong physical manhood; but remember it is only the scaffolding on which to climb in building the nobler and more worthy structure of a Christ-like character.

Some men measure manhood by manners. They have an idea that outward forms of politeness make a gentleman, whereas it may be only veneer. We are to cultivate the amenities of life, but they are not of highest value. Some men measure manhood by money. They really count a man worthy of their consideration in view of the size of his bank account, although they are not always concerned about how he secured his wealth. We need not pause to speak of the recognized place of money; but there are values which gold cannot buy. Some men measure manhood by military genius. A few years ago we thought we had passed that day; but it is with us again. David could not build the temple of God because he was a man of blood and death. Some men measure manhood by music. The realm of art and esthetics is their life. We are to seek to realize our fullest development along all such lines, for God gave us all things richly to enjoy; but the tragic fact about so many artists is that they have an idea that their art exempts them from the moral standards that most self-respecting people observe.

Some men measure manhood by mind. It is a splendid thing to master the world's thought, its history, its philosophy, its science, its poetry, its sweep of literary achievement. Yet the man who sins against increasing light only adds to his condemnation. Some men measure manhood by morals. Here again we are on a high plane. Any man is worthy of our admiration who strives for purity in the individual life, fidelity in the home, integrity in business, efficiency in citizenship, unselfishness in philanthropy. But all this only involves man's relations to his fellowmen, and does not go high enough. Let us pause here a moment, and ask ourselves whether, in fact, our measure of manhood stops at any of these levels. The point is not what we profess, but what we practice, to prove what we really believe to be the thing most worth having in the world. What is our enthusiasm? Does it reach higher than some one of these levels?

Some men measure manhood by the man Christ Jesus. Here the distinctive fact is a recognition of man's relation to the living God. Jesus Christ gives men a vision of the possibilities of human life when it is filled and made glorious by the indwelling life of God. His whole life reveals what God has made possible for every human soul to become. This is the true success of the redeemed soul.

One may not have gold, nor physical health, nor social station, nor brilliant intellect, and yet be a splendid success as a child of God, for he is living primarily in that high realm of spiritual realities where God intended his distinctive life to be developed. Where do you find yourself, measured by this standard?

PRAYER: *Clarify my vision, O God, until I shall pierce through all shams and less worthy values, and be satisfied with nothing less than Thy highest purpose for me.*

#### Fourth Day: What Is Most Worth While?

The logic of our Study carries us to the point of being able to realize what is most worth while in life. We have seen that we can realize God's highest purpose for us only when we rise above all ambitions for earthly possessions, or social place, or any achievement which seeks the praise of men rather than the praise of God. We have also seen that we glorify God by the fruitfulness of our lives as we fix our prayers and purposes upon the doing of his will, trusting him constantly to give us the joyful consciousness of his presence and power. It follows, without any possible question, that our particular objective on the side of service must be to help our fellowmen in their realm of special need, which is always in the spiritual life—where they, too, are to build character as unto God. The apostle John suggests the thought in his third letter (v. 2), "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, *as thy soul prospereth.*"

Therefore, whatever we may have in our hearts to do for others, in the way of relieving their physical sufferings, or their bodily needs, or their unfortunate circumstances, we must realize that all these ministries, good and worthy in themselves, are secondary to the supreme need of all men. These ministries to the earthly side of human life do not go far enough, if we neglect to seek to have men know Christ and know him better. This conception of what is most worth while for us to seek to achieve will lead thousands, if they appreciate this truth to the point of purposing to attempt to practice it, to reconstruct their programs. They are not giving more thought to the spiritual welfare of others than to anything else, in their contact with people. They are not giving time to

teach in the Sunday school. They are not giving time to those gatherings at the church, where the various gifts and graces of Christians are cultivated and encouraged. Some of them are scarcely loyal in church attendance, although they know that is always a distinct contribution to the cause of Christ in a community, where one soon becomes known as faithful or indifferent to the set times for public worship. They are missing the thing most worth while in life.

It will also mean one clearly definite and specific thing for all young people who have their Christian life ahead of them and have caught a vision of the truths we are seeking to emphasize. For we know well that the unescapable logic of these truths is that, when possible, one must give his whole time to direct Christian service of some kind. It may be the gospel ministry, or the work of a Christian missionary. It may be a medical missionary's task, so full of opportunities to minister to both body and soul. It may be a Secretarial position which offers kindred opportunities for definite Christian service. It may be some sort of executive service in the way of business manager for large missionary or other enterprises, so greatly needed in so many places. It may mean the position of a teacher in some Christian institution, at home or abroad, along the line of industrial training, or technical trade school work, increasingly needed. It will mean some sort of Christian work to which the whole life will be eagerly dedicated. It will mean that thousands of young people who have not faced this call of our Lord heretofore, will do so now, in this time of stupendous need. Will you hear this call of your Saviour for you?

*PRAYER: Lord, when Thou dost say: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" may I be ready to answer: "Here am I: send me."*

### **Fifth Day: Where Does God Call Me?**

There is a clear principle covering the answer to this question. But there are so many details entering into each individual's circumstances, that one must needs guard against a hasty conclusion. At the same time, one would not be true to his Lord and his own soul, if he should incline to magnify the elements that would

make his an exceptional case, rather than to exalt the principle and apply it faithfully. The principle is made clear in Acts 16: 6-11. We there learn that Paul desired to go into certain sections of Asia Minor to extend the scope of his ministry; but the Holy Spirit restrained him from doing so. Then he had a vision of a man in Macedonia beseeching him, "Come over and help us." There was no doubt in Paul's mind that this was God's call to preach the Gospel in Europe, so they were "obedient to the heavenly vision" and set sail in a straight course to the new field of labor, as yet untouched by the knowledge of Christ.

The principle is this: God's call is in the way of the larger need. Asia needed more men like Paul, even though there were many witnesses already there preaching the Gospel. But Europe had none. Its need was greater, in view of the lack of witnesses for Christ. We realize that one section of the earth needs Christ quite as much as another; but the relative need of any region is determined by the relative number of those who are at work there, giving to the people the blessings of the Gospel. Some years ago, when the writer was a pastor in New York City, he was also a member of our Board of Home Missions. One day Dr. Thompson handed him a letter from one of our missionaries in western Texas, by the name of Blois. His parish was a cattle-range section, where he spent most of his life in a saddle, preaching to hundreds of cowboys who would have a "religious round-up" for a day or so, when he visited them. Blois had received a call from a thriving little city in Texas, and was asking Dr. Thompson's advice as to what he should do. He was told that we would pray that he might be divinely guided, but could not offer specific advice.

Some days afterwards his reply came. It read, "We have declined the call. It was hard to do when we thought of the schools for the children, and of the neighbors for the family. But we decided it would be much easier to get a good man for that church than it would to find anyone who would love my boys the way we love them. We have decided to stay here for life." It was the way of the larger need. Some two years ago we were in El Paso. On taking up the morning paper, we noticed the headline, "The Little Shepherd of the Texas Hills Has Entered into Glory." It proved to be a column story of the marvelous blessing this one



man had been to all western Texas, in his self-sacrificing labors running through a score of years. As we turned the pages, an editorial also greeted us, detailing how everyone loved and admired Blois for his long and fruitful Christian service, and suggesting how much worth while it is for one to give his life to a consecration like this, whose blessings no man can number, as they extend through the years.

The relative need is in different parts of our own land, among neglected groups of people in our cities, large and small, and most of all in non-Christian countries. There is a Christian minister in America to every five hundred of the people. Add to this all the workers in Christian institutions and various agencies who supplement the work of the ministry. Then remember that if you set aside twenty-five thousand people in the non-Christian lands for each missionary there, giving him also all the workers who supplement his efforts, there remain five hundred millions of immortal souls for whose salvation Christ died, who have never yet even heard of Christ. Moreover, for every dollar that we give for all kinds of Christian propaganda in non-Christian lands, we spend twenty-five dollars at home to maintain and develop the Church of Christ and Christian institutions. One will scarcely claim that the need is twenty-five times as great here at home as it is abroad. Here then is the call of God to each individual who has felt the divine urge to give his or her whole life to Christian service.

*PRAYER: Lord, let me know definitely Thy will for me. Help me to realize that if I am absolutely ready to respond to Thy call, without any drawing back, Thou canst more readily make the way plain for me.*

### **Sixth Day: Questions about the Cost of Fidelity**

These are the questions of the Surrendered Life and the Problem of Self-Denial considered in Study II, where we urged the duty and privilege of enlisting others for Christ. There we applied the truth to every Christian, appealing to him to be a winner of souls to Christ and the Church, in the midst of all sorts of avocations. Here we seek to apply it even more definitely to each follower

of the Lord Jesus who is facing the conviction that the Master is calling him or her to give the whole life to Christian service. We ask that it be coupled with the considerations just presented in this Study, bearing upon the question of consecrating the whole life to the service of Christ and our fellowmen.

Perhaps the appeal will be most helpfully reenforced if we note the testimony concerning our Lord himself, as he responded to the call of God, his Father, to give his life for our redemption. In Heb. 12. 2 we read that he "For the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." What picture could stir our desire more keenly to follow in his footsteps than this account of his own fidelity at whatever cost? It is evident that Paul caught his own inspiration from Christ's consecration, as we read in Phil. 2: 5-11, "Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped; but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, . . . and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore God also highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name . . . that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Paul's testimony as to his own experience is just an echo of his Lord's example, which he sought to follow. His motto was Gal. 2: 20, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me." His testimony is in Phil. 3: 7-11: "What things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ. Yea, verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ, and be found in him . . . that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead." Paul was in the prison at Rome when he wrote that statement. He had lost his position as the brilliant young Pharisee, with social prestige, and political favor; and now he was a beggar in a Roman prison, receiving alms from his Philippian brethren, to whom he was sending his thanks.

His former world would have said, "What a miserable failure that young Saul of Tarsus has made!" But the Christian centuries give a different verdict, placing him at the very front of all the great leaders of Christian history.

Think for a moment of the different stories that would have been written into human history, if Christ or Paul had hesitated to do the will of God because of what it would cost! Think of the self-denial of Moses, choosing rather to suffer with his people than to be the ruler of Egypt's empire. Think of Daniel, choosing to face the lions rather than to be unfaithful to his God. Think of the different story that would be written today if our soldiers had hesitated to do their duty, in the face of suffering and hardship and death. Ah, yes. Only because faithful men and women have turned their backs upon the allurements of earthly things, and have toiled up the pathway of sacrifice, with joy because of the privilege, is the world as far along as it is today in the way of light and hope.

Shall we, too, have the spirit of the soldier? Shall we hesitate between the life in which self is on the throne that belongs to Christ, and the life that will go with him wherever he may lead, though it may mean Gethsemane also for us? It has been said that young Americans respond to an appeal to the heroic. Our soldiers did it on the field of battle, enduring all the privations that come to mind when we think of suffering hardship in the service of Christ, for those privations are all on the side of earthly comforts and pleasures. And shall we not be as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, ready to "fight the good fight of faith," giving our lives for this most worthy of all the causes which challenge our allegiance?

PRAYER: *O Christ of humiliation and of glory, let Thy mind be also in me. Let me take the form of a servant and be obedient all the way.*

### Seventh Day: Suggestions for the Class

A missionary in India wrote regarding a change from one station to another: "It was with little enthusiasm that I entered upon my new work. . . . The call meant breaking many ties and friendships. . . . Discouragements faced us in the new field. . . . Then God came to my help. He began by making things new in my own life.

... God threw the searchlight of his Holy Spirit upon my life ... I was beginning at the wrong end, and trusting to my own plans and efforts, rather than to the power of the Holy Spirit. ... God has been teaching me. The Church must raise up men. Or rather God must raise them up in the Church." Spirit-filled men are God's gifts to a praying Church.

1. What Scripture is quoted to stress the fact that the Christian has entered upon eternal life? What comparison is given between the enlistment of soldiers of the nations and the soldiers of the cross? What incident is told of Cæsar when he reached Britain? What most important question should every Christian ask himself when he first becomes a follower of Christ?

2. How do we usually determine whether anything is a success? What special application must we make in man's case? What special endowment has God given man? What does Paul teach about degrees of success in I Cor. 3: 11-23? What is the character of your "building" on Christ?

3. What is the measure of one's ideal? How does Christ realize unto us the highest possible ideal? Name the nine different standards given for measuring manhood, noting their relative value. What is the special significance in the measure that takes Christ as our ideal?

4. What is the logic of the foregoing thought that determines the only worthy objective for us in our service as Christians? To what supreme form of help must all others be secondary in our desire to be helpful to our fellowmen? In order to be faithful in this duty, what will it be necessary for many church members to do? What does it specially mean to all who are facing the problem of their life-work?

5. What is the principle which underlies God's call to us to serve in a particular field, or some particular service? How does Paul's experience illustrate this? Tell the story of Mr. Blois in Texas. Where is the greatest need for the knowledge of Christ today?

6. What Study should be reviewed again as we face these questions? Give the Scripture references which indicate the sufferings and self-denial of Christ. Give an account of the Scripture story of Paul's sufferings for Christ's sake. Where is it found?

What difference would it have made if Christ, and the men mentioned, had not been faithful, shirking their duty because of the hardships they faced in proving true? What is the appeal to us to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ?

PRAYER: *Give me such appreciation of Thy constraining love, O Christ, that I too shall say with Paul, "Woe is me, if I give not my life to Thy service."*



## STUDY XIV

### ABIDING IN CHRIST—INCREASING FRUITFULNESS

#### First Day: Christ Rightfully Expects Increasing Results

We are accustomed to give special significance to the last words of great men. Presumably they fix their thought on things most worth while, and some word of wisdom follows. We have reason to believe this was true of our Lord as he came to the end of his earthly ministry, and was giving commandment and exhortation to his disciples. An important record of one of his last utterances is found in John 15: 1-16, where he is stressing the thought to his disciples that God expects results from our lives, as the redeemed. "My Father is the husbandman," and he expects results. Our Lord probably had in mind the challenge of the prophet Isaiah to Israel, in Isa. 5: 1-7, where he pictured Jehovah as having planted a vineyard with "the choicest vine," and with the natural expectation of fruit: "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?"

God has given us life, and has endowed us with capacities and powers and possibilities. We have noted in our last Study how these endowments involve the obligation upon us to seek to realize his intention for us, as it becomes evident in the nature of our being. Since this appeal is to Christians who recognize God's right to our best, there is no need of argument here. We do need, however, to note that the fruitless branch is taken away, thrown aside as useless. How true it has been in the large lines of history! Note the shattered splendors of forgotten greatness, the broken palaces, the buried cities, of empires that are gone. Why did they go down? Because they failed to produce the results which God always demands. They did not meet the deepest needs of the human soul. Only as branches bear fruit that will nourish and

strengthen the immortal spirits of men have they any right to continue to exist.

Wendell Phillips often delivered a lecture on "The Lost Arts"; but the tragedy of history is not in its lost arts, but in its lost characters. And this brings our thought, illumined by the large lines of history, to the case of the individual soul without a spiritual victory, having no growth or fruitage in spiritual realities. What is the explanation of this failure? The context proves that the fruitless branch is the Christless branch. Yet people are trying to find a substitute for Jesus Christ, vainly imagining that something else will do as well. This is the supreme tragedy of human life, for it not only means being unfaithful to Christ, but even repudiates him as the source of victory.

This failure in fruitless lives emphasizes the fact that our Lord expects all of us who take his name not simply to be somewhat fruitful, but to be making steady progress in increasing fruitfulness. Any business that stops continued development is in the way to bankruptcy. The tree that ceases to bear fruit has begun to decay. There is no standing still for the Christian. Either he must advance or go backward. Christ mentions four classes of branches in the passage: (1) Those who bear no fruit; (2) those who bear some fruit, though not much; (3) those who bear much fruit; (4) those who bear more fruit. Here we reach the unlimited quantity. However far we may advance in Christ, there is still place for "more fruit." It is this type of Christian who adds glory to the cause of his Lord, who ever seeks "more fruit" in each of our lives. Let us note in the pages that follow some suggestions as to how we may be increasingly fruitful.

PRAYER: *Make my relation to Thee, O Christ, so vital that Thy life shall fill my life in all its conscious activity, thus making certain an increasing fruitfulness in Thy service.*

## Second Day: Deepening Our Friendship with Christ

That is a far-reaching statement of our Lord, recorded in John 14: 21, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and *will manifest myself to him.*"

This means knowing Christ better as we go on in fellowship with him. Let us think together definitely about the conditions to be met in order that not only we may abide in him, but that our abiding may deepen our friendship in such a way that our own life shall be sounded to deeper depths than it has known, and enriched beyond its present possession. There are three conditions, the cultivation of which must deepen and strengthen any and every friendship. Let us apply them very earnestly in our thought of deepening our friendship with Christ.

The first condition to the development of a true friendship is that *both must love the same things*. We cannot go very far in loving anyone, unless we love the thing about which his life is centered, the thing which is his enthusiasm, for which he would die. We might be fond of incidental features that mark one's earthly living; but until we go past all these into his inmost soul and know his deepest passion, we cannot really know him, nor understand him and his quenchless ardor for his supreme objective in life. To discover one who reveals his passion to be your own, his conception of life to be your own, this is to find a great awakening of loyal devotion to him, because of the quality of his soul. His reaching out to you inevitably for sympathetic friendship in this life, which enlists both of your spirits in deepest loyalty, meets with a great wave of eager response from your own soul that is the finest expression of purest love.

Now it is evident that the deepest passion in Christ's life is a wonderful love for his Father in heaven, a love that penetrates and saturates all of his living. It is God's redeeming love for lost men that explains Christ from first to last. All of Christ's love for the lost is just a sharing of the Father's love, in a oneness of spirit, manifest in his daily life and his atoning death. To enter into this divine love is possible for us. Take time to pore over the Word of God in order to learn better than ever to love the things that Christ loves. Not just a week, or a month, but at least three months. The result will amaze you. You will wonder that you never appreciated it before. Your prayer life will be deepened day by day, resulting in a new enriching of sympathy with Christ and with lost souls, and a heavier burden for the salvation of all men. This passion for the lost will be coupled with a holier joy

that you have discovered the heart of Jesus Christ more surely, and that he has fulfilled his promise, "I will manifest myself unto him."

The second condition is *mutual trust*. Of course this is impossible without the first condition. It is only as both love the same things that confidence develops in their understanding of the way they see life's meanings together, and seek to realize its purposes. For us this condition is to be pressed on our side of our friendship with Christ. We have proved that we can trust him. This experience may be greatly developed, as we learn to look to him constantly in everything, and also to trust him without doubting. But the point for our concern is, how far can our Lord trust us? It must be a mutual trust if the friendship is to go very deep into both lives. God once expressed such confidence in a man (Gen. 18: 19) and that explains why Abraham was known as "the friend of God." Is it presumption for us to hope to reach the place where we can say: "Dear Lord, you can count on me"?

Once in the city of Chicago three of us were standing together. One of the three was suffering the most furious trial he had ever known. We were trying to find words of comfort and encouragement. Then another placed his hand on his friend's shoulder and said: "Old man, you are going through the fire; but I want you to know that come what may come, you can count on me to stand by you to the end." There was no bravado in those words. They revealed a quiet, strong friendship that was ready to make them good. However hesitant we may be to venture such a vow of loyalty to Christ, surely we should be satisfied with nothing less than a daily prayer for a loyalty which he can see and measure with his own loving eye.

The third condition is *mutual surrender*. Here again we know how our blessed Lord has gone to the limit in his spirit of readiness to give himself to us, or to anyone who will accept him. The question for us is to discover how far we have surrendered to him all that we have and are. And since, in the nature of things, mutual surrender means mutual acceptance, it is evident that Christ must condition the degree of our friendship by the response that we have given to his eager desire to give himself fully to us and to receive us fully into his own life. That is an arresting statement in John 2: 24, "But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because

he knew all men." He can only give himself in so far as we are ready to take him. We often feel the desire to have more of Christ in our lives. Very well, there is just one condition necessary, and it is within our power. We may have more of Christ by just so much as we are willing that Christ shall have more of us. This we can determine, point by point, wherever we know that we have not yet given ourselves fully to him. Shall we go further than we have gone? He is eager for a far deeper friendship than we have yet known together. Shall we look into his face and hesitate about our answer?

*PRAYER: Lord, help me to get past "Less of self and more of Thee" to "None of self and all of Thee."*

### Third Day: Steadfast Loyalty to the Will of God

When Christ called his disciples to leave all and follow him, he offered them no dazzling cause, no alluring enterprise to whet their ambition. He offered them himself. Of them he asked one condition, which they must meet if they should remain with him; that condition was personal loyalty to him. He offered them his love and all that love will do for a friend, and he asked for their love in return. Now the fact which justified Christ's demand for the loyalty of his disciples was his own constantly manifest loyalty to his Father in heaven, the living God. His disciples soon realized that the loyalty they were to give to him was to become one with his loyalty to the Father. We have a modern term for steadfast loyalty which may be applied here. We call it *staying quality*.

One might summon many texts to emphasize Christ's assertion of loyalty to the Father. Hear him saying (John 8: 29), "He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." Again in his great prayer of intercession (John 17: 4), "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Moreover his loyalty to the will of his Father is identified with his loyalty to his followers (John 17: 19): "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." In this last phrase we are taught the concrete meaning of loyalty to the will



of God. Since that will is revealed to us in God's Word, we can only be loyal to his will as we are true to his Word.

In that same prayer in John 17: 14, our Lord said: "I have given them thy word." That was a vital part of his duty in coming. Again, when he desired to lift up to the Father the finest fact he could mention about his disciples, he said (John 17: 6): "They have kept thy word." Here is where the followers of Christ need staying quality. More than once Paul urged them to be faithful to the one gospel which he had preached unto them, as in Gal. 1: 6-12. He wrote to the Ephesians (Eph. 4: 14, 15): "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."

Thus we immediately see what is involved in steadfast loyalty to the will of God. It is folly to try to imagine that two men can be equally loyal to God's will, when one accepts only part of that revealed will. One will hold that loyalty must mean that we proclaim that the sin question is at the heart of the Gospel, and that there is no salvation apart from the atoning work of Jesus Christ, whereas another will say we have grown past those teachings, and the thing now to do in developing up-to-date Christianity is to let the sin problem take care of itself by helping to better the social condition of men. It would be a safe statement to make that by so much as men hold to the full Word of God as the infallible rule of faith and life, they are fruitful in the things which mark our abiding in Christ.

PRAYER: *Help us to be able to say with Thee, O Master, "I do always those things that please him."*

#### **Fourth Day: An Abiding Passion to Attain More Perfectly**

Here we have the key that unlocks the door of a larger fruitfulness in Christian living. When one has a quickening vision of something better for us which fixes our determination, by the help of God, not to vegetate or drift along without a definite effort to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord, that soul will begin

to climb. To do this one must be eager, positive, and proud of the privilege. He will not go far until a taste of the joy and blessing of cultivating the friendship of Christ will strengthen his determination to increase his definite program to that end. Paul has told us what the result will be in that beautiful statement in II Cor. 3: 18, "We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed (changed) into the same image . . . even as from the Lord the Spirit."

We have here a law of spiritual photography. One essential to a good photograph is the proper time given to receive the impression, according to the necessities of the case. Our ordinary photographs require a second of time. The moon may be photographed in less than half a minute. But it is most interesting to observe the plans perfected by the astronomers to give hours of time to the photographing of a star. One more essential to friendship thus comes to light. Friendship requires time. A moment's thought makes it quite evident that it is impossible to cultivate anyone's friendship without giving time to that friend. Together with other essentials, the time factor must be granted at the start. There is no more common excuse given by those who are not cultivating a personal relationship with Christ than "I have no time."

But we always have time, or make time, for anything we count important. The less important things must give way. The school-boy expects to give days to arithmetic. The young woman studying music plans to give hours every day to practice. The business man, as a matter of course, has decided to give "the best years of his life" in order to succeed. How manifestly then must we give time to God, if ever we grow into a blessed friendship with him. Many have proved that it is quite possible to do this, even in a very busy life. They modify their program and "put first things first." When Daniel was the executive statesman in the Persian empire, and received news about Jerusalem that grieved his heart, he decided that he must give several days to God. The affairs of the greatest empire on earth could wait. Note, in Dan. 10: 1-14, how he went down to the river Hiddekel and prayed and waited before God for twenty-four days. Then something resulted.

Perhaps we could not specify a better example of our thought than the life of Mr. Moody. As a boy he had no opportunity for

the culture of the schools, and realized all along his limitations on the human side. But few men cherished a more burning passion than he to go all the way with God, in order that God might use him increasingly. And God did not fail to use him as few men have been used in our generation. His whole being was charged with a spiritual energy which never seemed exhausted. With victorious faith he counted on God, with his unlimited resources, all the time. Once he said he formerly gave ten minutes a day to God, for he must give an hour to the daily paper; but for years he could only give ten minutes to the paper, for he must have his hour with God. That one statement is a significant commentary upon his life, and a challenge to us to enter into his experience.

PRAYER: *O Thou who art an available God, help me to realize how eager Thou art to give Thyself to me in such fullness as I shall make it possible for Thee to give.*

### **Fifth Day: Grace Sufficient for Every Victory**

The philosophy of Christian growth involves increasing victory in the inner life. Just at this point the postman brought a letter from a dear brother whose life has been marvelously transformed in the last five years. Then he was indifferent to spiritual realities and was going the way of the world. God touched him through a sermon he heard in Boston, and led him step by step, using various means of grace, into a close and still closer fellowship with Christ. In this letter he writes: "I don't consider that I am yet 'crucified with Christ.' Being crucified with Him has been only words with me, and will be until I am absolutely dead to self. It means something to be dead to self, to get rid of *our* ways, and *our* thinking, and be humbled sufficiently to get the mind of Christ and be led of the Spirit. This is the thing I am pulling for now. I am earnestly seeking to please Him in everything. This takes time. The best of it is it's 'glorious going' while we are getting ready."

When one thinks back five years to what this man was then, and realizes how God can give grace sufficient to overcome every temptation that one can face, the actual fact becomes very concrete, for the thing has been done before one's eyes. This man was a church member, a college graduate, a cultured gentleman, whom

many people would have thought to be "getting along all right." But he will tell you that Christ had no real place in his life. Moreover, when he first began to "return to the Lord," he came slowly to the place of a great longing for the deeper blessing. One may recall instances mentioned in previous Studies as proof of the fact that God gives grace sufficient for every victory, when we turn to him in the spirit of this brother. For the vital fact is that the way of victory opens only to those who catch the spirit of this letter.

It has been said "there is not only a death to sin, but a deeper death to self." Rather let us say that self is the root of all sin, and we never die to sin until we die to self. Sometimes God helps us to die to self by allowing us to go through sufferings, privations, financial reverses, in that these experiences tend to strip us of self-importance and any thought of self-sufficiency. Paul tells us that God allowed him to know this "chastening," which is not punishing, but making chaste. In II Cor. 12: 7-10, he tells us of his "thorn in the flesh" and how he prayed "that it might depart" from him; but the Lord said: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." And Paul looked away from himself, with his suffering, exclaiming: "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

Here again we must realize that the condition to this experience of victory through Christ is an obedient, trusting faith. Not simply a faith that looks for help in times of need; but a faith that eagerly enters open doors in God's great treasure house of grace, whether they be doors of suffering, or any other discipline. Some years ago a godly woman came to the writer to tell him of a great blessing she recently had experienced in a sense of nearness to the Heavenly Father, such as she had not known before. She had said little about it, but wanted her pastor to know. Some weeks later the morning papers startled us with the announcement that the business with which her husband was connected had failed. One could not say much in the way of comfort, for there was a whisper of dishonesty. Some days later she said: "A few of my friends, who knew of my recent blessing, have been telling me this is a trial of my faith. I do not think so. I believe that my Heavenly Father saw this awful thing coming, and in his loving wisdom did

not deem it best to prevent it, so he drew me closer, so that when it came, I would be able to bear it." Was anything ever more glorious than that? And the glory of it was that in her moment of keenest grief, her soul was bathed with a sense of the marvelous love of God. That is grace unto victory.

*PRAYER: Lord, help me to remember, in every time of need, whatever that need may be, that Thou art saying to me: "My grace is sufficient for thee."*

### **Sixth Day: Fruits of the Spirit Within and Without**

There is a fact of transcendent interest for us as finite beings, namely, that on one side of our natures there is no limit set to our growth, and that is the side where we may grow Godward, in the fellowship of Christ. In that fellowship alone can we do this, as our Lord clearly teaches, in John 14: 6, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." We have already magnified the truth that all our growth is the result of the working of the Spirit of God in our lives. Hence we have Paul's reference to the "fruit of the Spirit" in Gal 5: 22-24, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control: against such there is no law." "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

Moreover this progress is a great gain in personal equipment for winning others to Christ. When a Christian has found the grace of God sufficient to give him the victory over a quick temper, he is far better able to deal with anyone who is out of Christ. God can use him better than it was possible before. The principle applies to every other weakness that may be overcome by his sufficient grace. Thus we have both quality and quantity in the fruit of the Spirit. As we give Christ his mastery within, his Spirit gives us increasing mastery as his ambassadors to others.

Instances might be multiplied by way of actual proof of this power of "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." Henry M. Stanley testified before thousands on his return from Africa, that he went to that dark continent an agnostic and skeptic as to the reality of the Christian religion. But yonder in the heart of



Africa, where he lived day after day with David Livingstone, he could not resist the power of the Spirit of God working in his own life through Livingstone's living faith and beautiful fidelity. He accepted Christ and promised his Lord that if he should ever reach the home countries again, he would both confess his Saviour and also testify to Livingstone's influence as a "living epistle, read and known of all men."

In the home of Dr. Goheen, in western India, a servant was dusting the room and carelessly upset a beautiful vase, which fell to the floor broken into many pieces. Filled with fear, in view of experiences with certain foreigners whom he had formerly served, he fell to the floor begging for mercy. Quietly Dr. Goheen said: "Never mind. I forgive you." In utter amazement the sweeper looked at the smiling face, where no trace of anger was visible. Then leaping to his feet he exclaimed: "I believe. I believe!" On being asked what he meant, he replied that he had not been greatly impressed by the claims for Christianity, because of what he had seen in the lives of some professing Christians. But since he had come into Dr. Goheen's home, he had felt a different atmosphere, and had begun to realize a power in Christianity such as he had not seen before. And when he found that a man could be as patient and forgiving as Dr. Goheen had just been, in such aggravating circumstances, he was suddenly convinced by a strange power that swept over his being, that it was Jesus Christ who had accomplished this beautiful thing in the life of the Christian missionary. Hence his exclamation signified that he, too, believed in Christ's power to save and transform the believing soul. Thus the fruit of the Spirit is manifest within and without.

*PRAYER: Help us to glorify Thee, O God, in our bodies and in our spirits which are Thine.*

### **Seventh Day: Suggestions for the Class**

When a human soul is truly growing, it is restive at the idea of confinement. It is the spiritual earnest of still larger possibilities leaping out in response to the call of the mighty God. Hence the eager longing of all who have caught the vision of the victory in Christ to push on to its increasing consummation. It means being

so consecrated to God as to make it possible for Christ to say: "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20: 21).

1. What significance should we attach to the last words of Christ? What does he expect at our hands? Why? Mention the lessons of history to prove that a fruitless branch is taken away. What is the real tragedy of history? What four classes does Christ mention in speaking of bearing fruit?

2. What statement does our Lord make in John 14: 21? What three conditions are given for deepening our friendship for Christ? Dwell upon each as it is developed in this lesson.

3. What condition did Christ ask of those who became his followers? What Scripture is given to indicate Christ's loyalty to his Father? What is involved in loyalty to the will of God? How will difference of opinion as to the teaching of Scripture involve different practice in daily life?

4. What is the key that unlocks the door to larger fruitfulness? What statement of Paul's is quoted here? What is essential to photography? Illustrate somewhat. Why must we give God time? Illustrate the way people plan to give time to certain things. Tell how Daniel gave God time. How did Moody illustrate the idea?

5. Where must we have victory, if it be real? What is the idea running through the letter mentioned at this point? What is the story told of the writer of this letter? What is the relation of self to sin? How does God's chastening often help us? What was Paul's experience? What is said about the need of faith here? Tell the story of the woman who had a blessing before her time of trial, and her interpretation of its meaning.

6. On what side of our finite being are we unlimited? Where does Paul mention the "fruit of the Spirit"? What is the list given? How does this growth within help in the service without? Tell the story of Stanley in Africa. Tell the story of Dr. Goheen and his servant in India. Can you mention a case within your own knowledge where a consistent Christian life influenced another to confess Christ?

*PRAYER: Give me the victory within, O Lord, that it may shine out until profession will not need to be emphasized, as possession becomes manifest.*

## STUDY XV

### THE BLESSED REWARDS

#### First Day: Christ Emphasizes the Place of Rewards

The teachings of our Lord abound with the thought that rewards follow the fidelity of believers. We must not confuse, for one moment, God's gift of salvation with his rewards to his children. Salvation is not a reward, for man does nothing to earn it or deserve it. Paul states the truth clearly in Eph. 2: 8, 9, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." But having become children of God, we are given constant incentives to prove the reality of our faith by our works (James 2: 14-20), and are taught that the degree of our fidelity here will determine our place in the Kingdom of God. Recall again I Cor. 3: 11-15, where we are told of the different kinds of building on the one foundation, Christ Jesus. The same idea is in the parable of the feast (Luke 14: 7-11), where all who accept the invitation are welcomed to the feast, but some are told to take the lowest room, while others are called to go up higher.

There has been considerable discussion as to the ethics of rewards, in connection with motives, in the life of the true Christian. Beyond question, a sincere Christian is prompted to be faithful, not in the hope of reward, but in the eager desire to prove his loving gratitude, always inadequate, because of God's unspeakable gift of redeeming grace which has been vouchsafed unto us. In so far as any Christian gives place to selfish motives, in the thought of rewards, his spirit is unworthy. Doubtless when we turn away from our sin, there is a fear of punishment that influences us, even more than a hope of reward. That idea does not have much place in a penitent heart. Rather is his the spirit of the prodigal (Luke 15: 17-19), whose only thought is of his unworthiness to be called a son; while his hope is in his father's forgiving love which will perhaps allow him to be as a hired servant.

Our Lord would seem to assume sincere motives as he speaks of reward and recompense for the faithful children of God. And this is not a factitious thing, to be admitted or rejected in connection with conduct, as one may choose. Rewards are in the very nature of things. One cannot but be affected for good or ill by every thought, word, and act. There is inevitable gain or loss in the character of the individual, either in the conscious joy of honest achievement, or in the sting of conscience in the sense of wrongdoing. The reflex influence is as certain as that upon the life we touch. We cannot escape the consequences in so far as they affect character.

Beyond this, our Lord teaches that it is a worthy motive to cherish, to be true because of the results that will follow in the blessings that we shall bring to others and the joy that we shall bring to the heart of God. The flush of victory that we may know has in its keenest element of satisfaction the consciousness that someone else has been helped and that we may look up into the face of our Father to receive his smile. The thought is reenforced in Heb. 12: 2, "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." We may also note the seven promises in Rev. 2 and 3, "to him that overcometh." Hence we may make the most of every motive that is quickened by the worthy hope of reward in our own lives, in the lives of others, and in the added blessing of our Father and Judge.

PRAYER: *Help us, O Lord, to "lay up treasures in heaven," remembering the word of Jesus, "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."*

## **Second Day: Realizing God's Purpose for Us in This Life**

Every loyal Christian will have for his first thought of reward the satisfaction of accomplishing somewhat the things that God wants him to be and to do here during the earthly life. This is in the very front of Christ's thought, as he comes to his Father, in John 17: 4, in that great prayer which is the inscript of his continuing intercession, to make some report of his earthly ministry, "I

have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Also, in v. 8, "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me." It is also evident from the tone that runs through the parable of the talents, Matt. 25: 14-23, that our Lord counts the element of greatest joy in the report of the faithful servants to be the fact that they have accomplished that which their Lord expected of them, rather than the additional talents they were able to bring.

Underlying our sense of Christian stewardship there is also an appreciation of the fact of our partnership with God. "We are laborers together with God" (I Cor. 3: 9), and a part of the incentive to fidelity is found in the recognized obligations of partnership. It is the old idea of the covenant with God, which he himself started and which those who entered into cherished, as involving the deepest sense of honor of which we are capable, in being faithful to our part of it. We have it most keenly recognized today in our idea of a fiduciary trust, whose obligations seem specially to command the highest sense of honor and fidelity to the welfare of those whose interests are in our keeping. This is the spirit that should have fullest place as we think of being faithful in our partnership with God.

Moreover, the sharing of God's life and service goes deeper, for as we are taught in II Pet. 1: 4, we are "partakers of the divine nature." John also has this in mind when he declares (I John 1: 3), that our partnership is "with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ." Hence fidelity means not simply that we are advancing God's interests in the progress of his Kingdom, but that we are also advancing our own interests as factors in the progress of his Kingdom, not simply for time, but for eternity. We have noted heretofore that we are counted a success, or a failure, according as we accomplish that which God has indicated in the very nature of our being he intended us to do. Thus it is evident that we realize God's will by developing our capacities and possibilities to the full in laboring together with him in the realization of his plan for men. Our reward is immediate in an enlarged, enriched life.

The Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury was not an ordained minister; but no man ever had a clearer vision than he of the fact that God calls every man to be a partner with him in the divine-human task



of redeeming the lost. His biography reads like a dream of ideals realized in actual living. As a member of Parliament he secured more legislation than any other man of his time in behalf of shorter hours of labor, relief of child labor, adequate care of dependent and defective peoples, improvement of chimney sweeps and costers, and many other classes of the poor. He founded night schools into which he gathered waifs and young criminals and helped hundreds to find the way of a second chance. He established pensions for the aged. After hours in Parliament, instead of going home to rest, he went to the dark haunts of London to find and persuade some of the youth hiding there to come to one of the missions. He was president of more benevolent and missionary societies than any other man in England. On his deathbed he was offered burial in Westminster Abbey, but declined it, preferring his own quiet churchyard. He was not seeking the praise of men. He knew he had been trying to realize the purpose of God for him in this life, and that was his sufficient reward. His was the hope of heaven, but his heart was filled with thanksgiving and peace because of his honest effort to be faithful here.

*PRAYER: Help me to realize, O Lord, that the anticipation of joy in heaven loses half of its attractiveness unless I know that I have sought to be faithful here, in the midst of the world's need.*

### **Third Day: Sharing the Fellowship of Christ's Joy Now**

Twice in one address our Lord repeated a declaration about the joy in heaven "over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15: 7, 10). He gives us a most significant glimpse into his inmost soul in those words, for beyond doubt his deepest joy is in the consciousness that he has saved immortal souls from sin and death. This is the "boundless joy" of heaven and explains much of the glory of the abiding places in the mansions of God. This is the joy that throbs in the song of the radiant host that will ascribe endless praises to their Saviour.

And this same joy may be ours here and now. If you have never tasted that joy, we beg of you not to miss it. How can you go empty-handed into the presence of God without having helped one single soul to know Jesus Christ, and enter with much en-

thusiasm into the joy of heaven? You will have the joy of thanksgiving for your own salvation; but how can you enter into the joy of those who have been partners with the Lord in saving the lost?

“But none of the ransomed ever knew  
How deep were the waters crossed,  
Nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed through,  
Ere he found his sheep that was lost. . . .  
But all through the mountains, thunder-riven,  
And up from the rocky steep,  
There rose a cry to the gates of heaven,  
‘Rejoice! I have found my sheep!’  
And the angels echoed around the throne,  
‘Rejoice, for the Lord brings back his own!’”

We talk of being in fellowship with Christ; but how can it be any sort of understanding fellowship, that is truly sympathetic, if we never share here the fellowship of his joy in the salvation of the lost? It would seem the sheerest cant to talk about fellowship with him, without this element which was the very heart of his life on earth. On the other hand, ten thousand Christians will testify that there is no joy known to the human heart like this joy that comes when we realize that God has used us in winning a friend or neighbor to Jesus Christ.

Years ago in the city of Cincinnati a man sixty-five years of age was led to accept Christ as his Saviour. His joy was touching to see, and it was shining in his face continually. But he had a son in Honolulu who was not a believer, and a great burden was heavy on his heart for that son. At mid-week services he always requested prayers for his boy, and many entered into a faithful ministry of intercession. But the letters from the son were discouraging. One day the father announced that he was going to Honolulu to win his boy to Jesus Christ. We had a special farewell meeting at the midweek service, where we lifted father and son up to God, for a safe and successful journey. Day by day we remembered our covenant of prayer for them. Weeks passed before we heard. Then the message came. His boy was saved! How well we remember the joy of that father when he returned and told

us the story. He believed letters would not have accomplished the task. It was when he entered into the spirit that brought Christ down from heaven, and sailed away to save his boy, that God blessed his ministry of prayer and testimony and appeal.

*PRAYER: God forbid that I should appear before the throne, where we all must give an account, with not a single soul as a token of my fidelity.*

#### **Fourth Day: The Blessedness of Being, Rather Than of Having**

We have noted that the Beatitudes of Christ (Matt. 5: 1-12) set before us the way of the blessed life, and that the key to Christ's philosophy of life is in his emphasis of the truth that life's blessings are found, not in having, but in being. He emphasizes this further in Matt. 5: 13, "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted?" The ultimate riches are not those that can decay with time. These two categories of wealth were in Christ's mind when he said (John 6: 27): "Labor not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life."

The supreme values are in character, and they all inhere in the character of our Father in heaven. Salvation lifts us into the life of God, and its ultimate consummation will be redemption, not only from the penalty and power of sin, but also from its presence, as we stand before the throne, and behold the King in his beauty. As Paul describes the experience, beholding and reflecting the glory of the Lord, we shall be transformed into the same image, from glory to glory of character, even as by the Lord the Spirit. (II Cor. 3: 18). This is what John anticipates as he says (I John 3: 2): "We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." And he follows with the thought we have been seeking to emphasize concerning the motive for fidelity here, and the fruit of it hereafter, "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." Thus it is evident that in the heavenly life we share the character of God. This is the supreme blessedness of being.

We may taste this blessedness here and now. Someone has asked the question, "How much would you be worth, if you lost

all your money?" It is a striking commentary upon our ordinary thinking to note that if one were to ask of another, "How much is he worth?" it would immediately be taken for granted that the questioner desired to know how much money the man possessed! After the battle of Naseby, King Charles sent the message to his mother, "All is lost save honor." Such a spirit counted honor worth more than earthly crowns. Some years ago two men visited this country. One was George Mueller, of Bristol, England. Through practically all of his mature life he had lived not knowing how his needs would be provided for a week ahead. But he had a marvelous sense of the nearness of God and of the divine sufficiency ever available for him. People who heard him realized that he revealed a Christ-like life whose spiritual values money could never buy. Many who heard him forgot their earthly wealth in their hunger for this priceless bread.

The other man was Andrew Murray, coming from South Africa, bringing an experience, out of which his testimony came with power, of the truth that men may know rich blessings that the average Christian never receives, if they seek the inner chambers of the King, especially the place which he described as "The Holiest of All." Hungry souls thronged to hear him, for they felt, as they touched his life, that he lived his message. He, too, had nothing of this world's goods; but his were the priceless riches of godliness. A multimillionaire might do far-reaching good with his wealth; but at the end, looking onward into the heavenly life, where gold is not the coin of spiritual exchange, who would hesitate as to which of these two lives he would choose to carry before the face of God? Even so, it is as we cherish the blessedness of being here, that we shall be able to possess its joys forever.

*PRAYER: Let the truth of this lesson sink down deep into my soul, O God, until I may know the standard of the apostle, to keep himself "unspotted from the world."*

### **Fifth Day: Welcomed into Everlasting Habitations**

In the so-called parable of the "Unjust Steward" (Luke 16: 1-13) we have a very illuminating sentence which includes the thought in the title of this lesson. This parable has not always been rightly

understood. The shrewdness of the steward was praised by his lord, or employer; but not by our Lord Jesus Christ, for he never approved anyone's conduct that was not absolutely just and honorable. Like most of Christ's parables, this one was probably based on an incident known to his hearers. After referring to it, he turned to the disciples and stressed the fact that they were stewards, and would do well to consider what kind of account they could render unto God. He asks the same question of us today. What must be our answer?

In this connection our Lord makes the statement about the mammon of unrighteousness. The Authorized Version unfortunately translates the Greek, "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness." [This is contrary to Christ's teaching about riches. There is no text that justifies us in setting our hearts upon getting wealth. Christ taught in Matt. 19: 23-26, that for most men wealth hinders our spiritual growth. Rich people are liable to think too much of self in the realm of having, which is seriously dangerous. The Revised Version properly translates the Greek, "Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when it shall fail, they [the friends] may welcome you into the eternal tabernacles (dwelling places)."] This is a very different statement, and it is the true one.

Mammon is the god of this material world. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the God of the spiritual world. No man can serve both. He is giving his first allegiance either to mammon or to God. When serving mammon he is using the things of God. When serving God he is using the things of mammon. We have to do with both. Every man is either mammon's master or its servant. Stewardship involves using both the things of God and of mammon. Christ's teaching is that we should use our money, or any earthly position we may attain, with its attendant influence, in order to advance the Kingdom of God in the earth. And he specially stresses the fact that the specific thing for Christians to do is to win souls to himself, so that when the earthly possessions are gone into the dust of the grave, the immortal souls, saved from the slavery of sin, will live on forever. And as the shrewd steward planned for a welcome in his days ahead, so Christ urged that we be faithful, because it will also mean for us in that day a welcome



by some of those whom we have been allowed to help to find the way everlasting.

Let us seek to visualize the actual experience suggested by the words of our Lord. A child of God approaches the joyous throng of the redeemed, looking specially for loved ones, reunion with whom has been an ardent anticipation for years. These are seen just a little back of some others who are allowed to have a front place as he draws near. What can this mean? He is soon informed. At the very front is a redeemed saint from India who hastens to give him the glad welcome, saying: "It was your money that helped to send the missionary who brought to me the knowledge of the salvation which God had provided in Christ." Another joins in the welcome, exclaiming: "It was your money that paid for a Bible which came to me in the heart of Africa, wherein I learned of the way of life through Jesus." Still another will say: "You brought a message one day in the city of Chicago that led me to the feet of our Saviour. Welcome into the everlasting habitations." It was some such picture, we may reasonably believe, that was in the mind of Christ, as he pointed their thought forward to that day of unspeakable joy. Then all the hardship, all the self-denial, all the cross-bearing will be forgotten forever in the sense of compensation a hundred-fold.

*PRAYER: Help me to look past every cross, O Christ, as Thou didst, and see the joy beyond every earthly trial, waiting for all the endless years.*

### **Sixth Day: The Glories of the Redeemed**

In Christ's great prayer of intercession we have a statement which at once looks back to the glory which was his before his earthly ministry, and forward to the day when the redeemed are gathered with him in the presence of God the Father. In John 17: 24, we read: "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." Here it is evident that the central experience in the glory of the redeemed is to be the glory of the Redeemer, in which his own are to share. In Rev. 21: 22, 23, we read, "I saw no

temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun . . . to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

Again, in Rev. 21: 9-11, we read that one of the angels came unto John and said: "Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, *having the glory of God.*" The mere words cause us to pause, as we try to appreciate even in our poor, inadequate way, what that means. For we have learned to enter into some appreciation, however insufficient, of the glory of God. We have already noted that the redeemed shall share the very life of God, which means to be like him in his beauty of holiness, in his splendor of loving justice, in his eager spirit which has led him ever to be giving himself to all living beings who were ready to receive him, his life, his love, his knowledge, his power. We call it consecration to service, and nothing in the glory of our God is so fascinating in its matchless values as this.

But now we are to try to realize the glory of all this, as the Redeemer comes to that day, of which he was thinking long ago, when he said (Mal. 3: 17), "They shall be mine in that day when I make up my jewels." The diamond gathers all its glory from the sun, as the carbon develops its processes of crystallization unto perfect purity. And at the same moment that the diamond receives its glory from the sun, it also glorifies the sun in return by its constant reflection of that glorious light from each of its polished facets. Perhaps we have here a suggestion of a like experience on that wonderful day of glory. There will be something about each redeemed one that will be like the Lord himself, some feature of Christ-like character that has come to such perfection that everyone will recognize that particular glory of character as reflecting his own image. Some will reveal more than one, possibly several. Our finite minds are bewildered at the mental picture of such glory of character as shall make heaven a place of unspeakable bliss.

All this awaits the redeemed. How can one think of it in prospect and be complacent at the thought that someone may miss it all, because we have not been faithful witnesses for our

Lord, or because during the years to come we may still prove indifferent to our opportunities to point one and another to him who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life"? In soberness we should hold our thought in the face of this challenge. For every glimpse of reward is given us as an incentive to our fidelity. Our Lord himself has taught us the relation between our faithful service here and the reward to be received in his presence. In Matt. 25: 14-23, in that part of the Parable of the Talents which contains the reports of the faithful servants, we note his statement that the best he can say for us will be, "Thou hast been faithful over a few things."

Let us measure that careful word of Christ. To be faithful in a few things, really faithful, will be an attainment revealing our submission to the will of God, and our dependence upon his needed grace, that will glorify him in so far as it will mean that self has died and Christ has lived in us. That will explain the Christ-like quality that will shine out at that great day. By just so much as Christ has lived in, he will shine out. It will be this glory of character that will enable people to recognize a likeness to him in "a few things," so that he will confess us before his Father as his. There will be no factitious judgment. Paul explains it in I Cor. 3: 13, "Every man's work shall be made manifest . . . of what sort it is." The Latin Vulgate translation of that word is *qualis*. The quality of the diamond, rather than its size, is in its capacity to reflect the light of the sun in increasing perfection. This will be the glory of the redeemed, having a part in reflecting the unspeakable glory of our blessed Redeemer, world without end, Amen.

PRAYER: *We thank Thee, O God, our Father, that Thou dost make us "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."*

### Seventh Day: Suggestions for the Class

"They sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy . . . for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth. . . . Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and bless-

ing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and in the sea, and *all that are in them*, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (Rev. 5: 9, 12, 13).

1. What is Christ's teaching about rewards? Make the distinction between salvation as a gift, and the place of reward in the Christian life. Why are rewards inevitable? What Scripture is given to show that Christ himself had his reward in mind during his earthly ministry?

2. What is the first element of satisfaction in our thought of reward? What is the point mentioned in the Parable of the Talents? What is said of our partnership with God? How do we think of a fiduciary trust? In what way does our partnership go deeper? Tell the story of the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury.

3. Where in Scripture does Christ emphasize the joy of heaven? What does he say is the occasion of that joy? What is necessary to real fellowship with Christ here? Tell the story of the man in Cincinnati who went to Honolulu.

4. What is the philosophy of life taught in the Beatitudes? How are we to share the life of God? How may we do this now and here? What occurs to us when we are asked what anyone is worth? What message did King Charles send to his mother? What is said about George Mueller? What of Andrew Murray?

5. What misunderstandings have some had about the Parable of the Unjust Steward? What is the correct translation of the Greek? How do we relate ourselves to God and mammon? How is the welcome into everlasting habitations pictured?

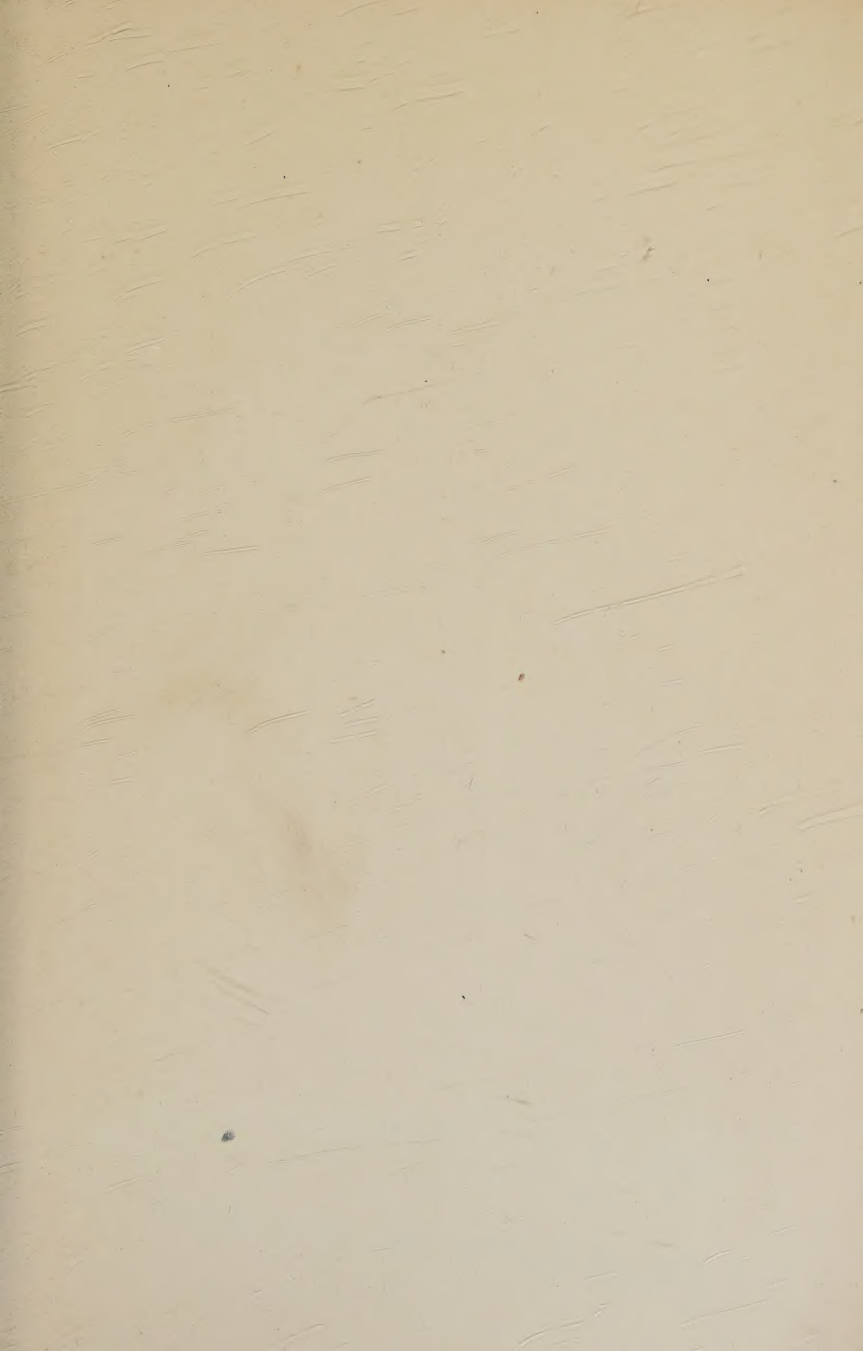
6. Where does Christ mention the glory of the redeemed? What does he say about it? What is said in the quotation from Rev. 21: 9-11? How is God sharing himself with us now? What is illustrated by the diamond? How does the thought of the reward challenge us? What does Christ say about the degree of our faithfulness? How shall we be recognized as his at that day?

PRAYER: *Grant, O Lord God, in Thy gracious goodness, that these Studies may prove an abiding blessing to every soul who reads them.*









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